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Give me your hand, lad, and tell me whether you have seen any thing of the Brigade? I'm afeard we're in a condemned difficulty!"

## NICK WHIFFLES' PET; OR, Ned Hazel, the Boy Trapper.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,

The Hunter-Author, and Nephew of the Celebrated Old Grizzly Adams, the Bear-Tamer of the Rocky Mountains.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A "CONDEMNED DIFFICULTY."

"HERE I am in a condemned difficulty ag'in," muttered Nick Whiffles, as he seated himself on a broad, flat rock, on the bank of the Elk river, far up in Oregon, close to the boundary line between that wild territory and British America.

The eccentric old trapper had spent many years in roaming through the vast solitudes of the North-west, sometimes in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and sometimes in the employ of the North-west Fur Company, but perhaps more frequently entirely alone. A man of his peculiar temperament and tastes was sure to be widely known, both at the far-scattered trading-posts and among the numerous trappers and hunters that wandered through that vast wilderness, which, at that

comparatively recent day, knew scarcely anything of the advantages of civilization.

As was the inevitable custom of Nick, when in a quandary, he relieved himself by self-communing.

"The Whiffles family was always noted for the way they had of getting into difficulty. The first thing I remember was in getting spanked on account of some condemned difficulty that I had got into with my mother, and the next thing was the measles and whooping-cough, and then when I got fairly over them and a dozen other diseases, our house took fire and burned down, and about the time the old gent got it rebuilt, it took fire and burned down ag'in. Wal, he didn't say nothin', but when the cabin went the third time, he got mad and said that thing was getting rather monotonous, and he would like, by way of variety, to see it shook down by an air-

quake, or carried away by a harricane; but of course none of them things happened.

"Then, when the old gentleman took his last sleep, and they come to read his will, we found the lawyer had my name down wrong; instead of being Nick Whiffles. Ees, it was Old Nick, so I didn't get the bequest at all, but then, as everything else had been willed away already, I didn't lose much after all. My old-er brother got the house, but, afore he could move in it there came a big fresheet that carried it down-stream, and that was the last of that.

"There was no end to my difficulties. When I had got to be a young man, I spent a whole summer's earnings in buying a suit of clothes. I had got to be a little tender on a cross-eyed girl that lived about a half-mile off, and, as soon as I could stow myself away in my new suit, I started out to see her. She gave me a hint that she wa'n't particularly anxious,

as, when I went to go in the house, she set her dog on me, and the very first dash he made, he ripped out the whole seat of my pants and run away with it, so that there was no chance of putting the missing cloth back ag'in.

"Wal, Nick Whiffles has seen a good deal in the way of difficulty since them days, but, somehow or other, the good Lord has brought me through all right, and, although I bear a good many scars, I'm yet sound in limb and wind, and able to eat my usual hunk of venison, foller the trail of an enemy, or run my eye along old Humbug here in a way that'll make her bite when she barks; and for all this I'm thankful."

The old trapper was silent a few moments, as if in a deep reverie. Near by his horse, known as Shagbark, was lazily cropping the grass in a way that showed he was in no famishing condition, to say the least.

At the feet of Nick Whiffles flowed the Elk river, quiet and unruffled by the slightest ripple of wind. On the other side, and as far as the eye could reach, stretched the Oregon woods. There were woods on every hand, and far off in the distance could be seen the white peaks of the Rocky Mountains, their tops covered with the snows of centuries.

It was one vast solitude, such as it had stood at "creation's morn'g," and looking upon the figure of the trapper as he half-sat and half-reclined upon the stone, it would have been easy to imagine him some statue cut from the rock itself.

But, as Nick remarked, at the opening of our story, he was in a "condemned difficulty"—nothing very serious, it is true, but enough to cause him some annoyance, and to occasion him considerable communing with himself.

Three days before he had crossed the line in-



to British America, and was making his way toward the Saskatchewan, when he turned out of his path, somewhat, to call at Fort Wilbur to see some of his old friends, when he learned that the brigade of the Oregon Department of the Hudson Bay Company was expected in within a week; it had divided up into several companies, and two of the canoes were on their way down the Elk river, for the purpose of bartering for a very valuable lot of furs and peltries that were known to be in the possession of a party of Blackfeet, whose village was on the northern bank of this stream. The traders expected to obtain Nick Whiffles to act as a sort of "go-between" in the business, as he stood on good terms with these treacherous people, and his universally known and respected probity could not fail to make him a valuable man to both parties in the business.

Nick had acted in this capacity before, so that when the wishes of the trappers were made known to him, he felt under a sort of obligation to accept, and he turned the head of his horse, Shagbark, toward the south, and accompanied by his sagacious dog, Calamity, made the best possible time for Elk river again.

The particular "difficulty" to which he referred was this: His cabin was about twenty miles away from where he now found him, and there had left a young protégé of his—a bright-eyed boy known as Ned Hazel, a sort of waif of the woods, that had come into his hands, in a singular manner, a number of years before, when he was little more than a mere child. It had been left at the "cottage," with the understanding that his adoptive "father" was not expected to return under three weeks, and now he was back again at the end of that number of days. He was anxious to take the little fellow on this short excursion, and had stopped at his house in the hope of finding him, but he was off on a hunt of his own, and Nick, not daring to wait, had hurried off for Elk river, where we now find him.

But where was the brigade? Above him or below him? That was the question for him to decide, and having no data by which to make his calculation, he set it down as a "condemned difficulty."

He had sent Calamity a half-mile up the river to watch and to report to him the first appearance of the brigade, while he enjoyed the uncomfortable sensation of knowing that, as likely as not, the party for whom he was waiting might be drawing further away from him each moment.

"There's a company of them Nor'-westers somewhere in this neighborhood, and if they happen to run ag'in' the brigade, there'll be the condemned difficulty ever heard tell on."

His horse had suddenly ceased eating, and, raising his head, with the grass unchewed in his mouth, gave a whinny, clearly indicating that some one or something was approaching.

"What is it?" asked Nick, instantly becoming all vigilance himself.

The horse held his head motionless for a moment, and then resumed his cropping the grass as unconsciously as before.

Nick Whiffles smiled.

"That means it's Calamity coming. You critters understand each other about as well as I understand you both."

The words were yet in his mouth, when the huge dog that had been the companion of Whiffles in so many exciting incidents of his life burst through the undergrowth and signified his pleasure by whining, wagging, and licking the hand of his master. The latter patted his head with no less delight.

"What is it, Calamity, for I know by your ways that there's something coming down the river? Is it the brigade or some other sort of animal?"

How, or by what means, Nick got at the meaning of the dog, it would be impossible for us, an "outsider," to say, but it required only a few moments for him to learn that it was not the brigade, but a single canoe descending the river.

"That much being said," said Nick, "the difficulty is as to who handles the paddle; like enough some murderous Blackfoot; but, he added, with some hesitation, as he narrowly scrutinized the actions of his dog, "the animal don't act in that way. He seems to have a better opinion of the chap than me."

As it was impossible to gather the full meaning of Calamity, Nick could only cast his eye up the river and wait for the mystery to solve itself.

He was not left long in waiting. Around the curve in the river, just above him, a small canoe suddenly shot to view, in which was seated a small boy, dressed as a hunter, and using the long shaggy paddle with no slight skill.

The eyes of Nick Whiffles sparkled as he recognized the lad, and he rose and waved his hand as a signal.

"Bless the soul of little Ned; his own father couldn't love him any more than I do."

The water splashed and flashed in the sunlight, as the lad sent his little boat skimming over the surface of the river. A few moments only were needed for the prow of the canoe to strike the gravel at the feet of the hunter, who advanced to the water's edge to greet his pet.

"Give me your hand, lad, and tell me whether you have seen anything of the brigade."

"Nothing, uncle Nick."

"I was afraid you hadn't; then I'm afraid we're in a condemned difficulty."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HUDSON BAY MEN.

An observer would not have failed to be struck with the contrast of appearance between Nick Whiffles and the boy with whom he was now conversing.

The hunter was bronzed, scarred and tanned by the torrid heat of summer and the Arctic coldness of the tempests that during the winter months sweep over the plains and mountains of the North-west. His face was shaggy with his untrimmed grizzled beard, and his hair, that escaped from beneath his coonskin cap, was silvered by the same hand that spares none of us. There was immense strength in those long, muscular limbs, and although Nick generally moved with a slow, shuffling gait, he was capable of astonishing quickness and celerity of movement when necessary.

Ned Hazel, as he was called, was about fifteen years of age, rather slight for that number of years, with eyes as bright, and cheeks as delicately ruddy, as if he had been born and reared in the palace of some noble in sunny France.

His movements were all grace, and underneath the delicacy of feature and color was the grand basis of rugged health that had already triumphed over obstacles under which many a man would have succumbed. There was no doubting that the deep affection of

Nick Whiffles was fully reciprocated by Ned, whose lustrous eyes glowed with a brighter light when he looked the grizzled old hunter in the face.

The boy began frolicking with the dog, while Nick turned his eyes up-stream, with an anxious expression of countenance that showed that his mental "difficulty" was far from being purely imaginary. Suddenly he turned to Ned.

"Were ye looking for me, lad?"

"That was what brought me here."

"And what reason had you to think me here, when you see'd me start for Fort Wilbur?"

"Why, uncle Nick," replied Ned, pausing in his gambols with Calamity, "you hadn't been gone a half-day when I happened to think it was just the time last year when you went down the river with the brigade, and I knew you expected to do the same this spring; so I was sure you had forgot it. But you was so far away that there was no use in my trying to overtake you, and I thought perhaps you would think of it and come back yourself. Sure enough, when I came back, I found signs in the cabin that told me you had been there. I understood what it meant, so I made for the river, and jumping into the canoe, here I am."

"If I only knowed—Hark!" suddenly exclaimed Whiffles, his face lighting up, while he assumed an attitude of attention. "Did you hear nothing then, younker?"

"Yes; it is the brigade," replied Ned, also intently listening. "Yes; it's the brigade," he quickly added; "just hear them!"

Through the quiet air, mellowed and softened by the intervening distance, came the sound of male voices singing in time with the regular sweep of their paddles. There was a profundity of tone, and an impressive melody in the blending of the score and more of voices that struck the ears of both Nick and the boy.

"I've heard that same thing many a time before," muttered the hunter, more to himself than to his companion, "and it allers makes me feel all overish. Three years ago, when I was on the Saskatchewan, I was asleep one night, in my canoe, when I awoke and heard the brigade about a mile up the river, where they were encamped, singing. I listened awhile till they started off on the identical hymn that I used to hear sung when I was a boy. Wal, fore I knowed it, the tears was running down my cheeks, and I was back in the little village church at home, with my old gray-haired mother and father, the choir singing that same hymn. Wal, wal, what's the use?"

He drew his hand across his eyes, as though some mist obscured his vision, and, with a great sigh, turned his back upon the past and looked up the river into the future.

Two large boats, or canoes, a moment later glided to view, the melody swelling out with a full volume, as it was free from all intervening obstruction, and floated over the smooth face of the river.

Each canoe was capable of holding twenty-five or thirty men, but at present there were little over twenty in the entire party. They were after furs and peltries, and took with them a good working crew and no more.

A few moments after they appeared, Nick Whiffles stepped to the edge of the stream and motioned with his hand for them to approach. He was recognized at once, and both canoes instantly headed toward shore. The inmates showed no intention of landing, but the foremost rounded to for him and Ned to step aboard.

"We yield you the place of honor," said a round-faced, Scotch-looking gentleman, whom Nick recognized as William Mackintosh, a leading man in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. "There is room for your boy and your dog. I don't suppose you want to take your horse along?"

"No; I will leave Shagbark here."

"Suppose he wanders away?"

"He knows better than to go very far; and he and Calamity understand each other so well that they're sure to find each other out. Come, dog, in with you, and lad, do you follow."

Calamity sprang lightly into the front of the canoe, while the boy leaped, as nimbly as a fawn, after him. Then the old hunter followed, with more deliberation and dignity. As he glanced over the crews, he identified quite a number, and nodded good-naturedly to them. But no other salutation passed between them, their attending strictly to business, leaving their director, Mr. Mackintosh, to play the part of host.

The latter chatted pleasantly with Nick, but all the time he nervously scanned the lad, who sat playing with the dog, and occasionally glancing at the shore as they glided by.

"Nick," said Mr. Mackintosh, after a while, "I had heard that you had a boy, but I never saw him before. He doesn't resemble you a bit."

"And why should he?"

"I believe you can always detect a likeness between father and son, and I've been studying for the last ten minutes to see where it is between you and him, but it isn't there at all."

"I never was married, and consequently I never had a son. He is no more a relation of mine than you are."

"Ah! who is he?"

"Ned Hazel."

"I know, but where did he come from, and how is it that he is in this part of the world?"

Nick seemed on the point of replying to this question in full, when he suddenly checked himself.

"If it's all the same to you, Mr. Mackintosh, we won't talk about that thing. You understand?"

The Scotchman did understand, and showed his good breeding by skillfully turning the conversation upon business matters.

"We shan't make the Indian village tonight, I'm afraid, Nick."

The hunter turned his head, and scrutinized the shore, a moment, so as to make sure of his location before answering.

"No; but there is going to be a full moon, and you can go a good distance; you order try and hit it near daylight."

"Can we do it by rowing an hour or two this evening?"

"Yes; powerful easy."

"Then it shall be done; we can make a good dozen miles before night."

"Yes, as we've got the current with us."

"You haven't seen any of the Nor'-westers, have you?"

"Not lately; but there's a party of 'em somewhere in the country. I've run ag'in' signs of 'em, and then I've heard of 'em through some of the red-skins."

"I hope they won't get down to the Blackfoot village ahead of us, for we count on making a good haul there."

"I don't think there's any likelihood of that, but some of them chaps ar' as cunning as foxes."

"I hope, too, that our party will not encounter them."

As Mackintosh added these words, it was with a seriousness which showed that he was earnest in the wish which he had expressed.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PHANTOM PRINCESS.

Just as the shades of night began settling over Elk river and the adjoining wilderness, the brigade (as it was improperly termed) turned the heads of their canoes toward shore, and landed at a point where there was a sort of natural clearing in front of a dense wood.

Here the fine discipline of the party was made manifest. A certain number at once busied themselves in gathering wood for fuel, others brought forth the provisions, which they always carried with them, while every one seemed to have some particular duty to perform, and to understand what it was without any direction from the leader of the party.

The Hudson Bay Company, although trading through its agents, with friendly Indians, still had occasional difficulty with some of the tribes within their territory. When they penetrated into the Oregon department, they generally went prepared for any emergency, and the caution that distinguished all their movements showed that they were not without apprehensions regarding their safety.

Two of their members, therefore, took upon themselves to act the part of scouts, while Nick Whiffles, for the satisfaction of himself and Mackintosh, started out to reconnoiter the country that immediately surrounded them. He went entirely alone—that is, with no companions except his inseparable friend Calamity.

Mackintosh waited until certain that the trapper was fairly out of the camp, and then, while his men were busy at their respective duties, he turned to the lad and invited him to seat himself upon the blanket at his side. The boy obeyed cheerfully, but showed in his manner that he had some curiosity to know what it all meant.

The Scotchman had made up his mind to do a thing about which he had some compunctions of conscience, that is, he intended to question the boy without the knowledge of Nick Whiffles.

At the same time, he wished to do nothing in itself wrong. Doubtful whether the lad knew the precise nature of the relationship existing between him and the eccentric trapper, he determined carefully to avoid enlightening him in that respect.

Speaking in the most matter-of-fact manner, he said:

"Your name is Ned, I believe?"

"Yes; Ned Hazel."

"Not Ned Whiffles, eh?"

"Oh, no; Nick is not my father; only my uncle."

That point settled, the interlocutor felt the way more clear.

"How do you like this sort of life?"

"Very well."

The answer in which this reply was made proved that the lad, to say the least, was not perfectly satisfied.

"This out-door rugged life is certainly very healthy. I presume you do not know of such a thing as sickness by experience?"

"No, sir," was the respectful reply.

"You talk like a boy of some education. Do you know how to read?"

"Oh! yes; Nick can read a little, and he brought me some books from the forts that I have studied; but then, I don't know much," naively added Ned, with a laugh.

"You are about fifteen years of age, I should judge."

"That's it, exactly."

"A boy who has spent all his life in the woods isn't apt to acquire as much as you have done."

"This was a feather thrown out with an object, and it accomplished its purpose."

"But I haven't always lived in the woods."

"Ah! how is that?"

"Didn't Nick tell you that he found me in a canoe, drifting down the river, and he picked me up, and hunted a week for my owners, and never learned a thing about me? If he didn't tell you, that's the way it was. He took me to his cabin, and I've lived with him ever since, until we love each other just as much as though he were really my father."

"Why, you have quite a romantic history," said Mackintosh, skillfully concealing his curiosity from the youth. "Do you recollect that trip down the river at such an early age?"

"Sometimes I think I can, but I ain't sure. I was very young then, and dressed in baby-clothes."

"What became of those clothes?"

"All lost, I suppose, long ago, as I've never seen them."

"They ought to have been kept, as they might have afforded some clue to your identity in after years."

"Neither Nick nor I care about learning anything more about me."

"Do you have any recollection of anything that happened before Nick found you? You know that persons can sometimes remember things far back in their childhood."

The boy was silent a moment before answering.

"Sometimes I remember a little—only a little."

"Let me ask you to describe your remembrances?"

"It's hard to do; they come to me in dreams sometimes. Then I hear men singing away off, it reminds me of something I have heard very much like it, away back, when I was very small; and then, sometimes, when I am stretched out on my back in the woods, looking up through the trees at the clouds, I can remember that I once have seen tall houses, standing close together, and a great many people walking between them."

"That shows you have once been in a city," interrupted the Scotchman.

"There be some pictures of such places in my books, and I know I've seen them somewhere."

"Can you remember any figures or faces?"

"I can remember a woman's face that used to bend over me."

"How did it look?"

"Oh! so beautiful like an angel's."

"You can't describe it?"

"No one could—sometimes I think it must have been the Phantom Princess."

"The Phantom Princess?" repeated Mackintosh, in amazement. "What do you mean by that? Who is she?"

"Haven't you heard of her? But here comes Nick; he'll tell you all about her, for he knows her."

The Scotchman started, and hastily said, in an undertone:

"Oblige me by saying nothing to Nick about the questions I have asked you, and leave me to find out for myself all about the Phantom Princess."

Ned looked somewhat surprised at this request, but he nodded, as he rose to his feet, to signify that the request should be respected.

Nick Whiffles seemed entirely unsuspecting

of the interview, and came up in his usual cheery humor.

"Me and Calamity have made a sarnet," said he, "and we can't find any sign of a red-skin near. I'm glad your feed is ready, for I'm as hungry as my grandfather was in England, when he chased up the Prince of Wales, and chased his father into his palace. The Whiffles family was always noted for their eatin' perclivities; my grandmother used to amuse herself by settin' on the scales and eatin' billed chickens till their heads that was chopped off would outbalance her, and then she throwed away the bones, so that they didn't count."

"You are no great eater yourself, Nick."

"Oh! mighty! no!" sighed the trapper; "I was such a small eater that I was considered a disgrace to the family, and was turned out on that account. My grandfather fit in the Revolutionary War, and when he retired on a pension, he got five hundred a year, which he laid out one month in Bologna sausages and salt mackerel, and then bein' as he hadn't any more to live on, he pined away and died, afore he could get his pension increased."

The supper being ready, the trappers gathered in several groups, and sitting down tailor-fashion, fell to with the vim and vigor of men who were in the enjoyment of perfect health and digestion.

Nick Whiffles, Ned and Mackintosh ate in a group by themselves, while all were so occupied with their employment that scarcely a word was exchanged except in the way of request for food.

It was a singular scene. The somber forests in the background, the broad, smoothly-flowing river throwing back the yellow light of the immense, roaring camp-fire, the two large canoes resting against the bank, and the figures of the men engaged in eating.

The warm light of the blazing fagots was scarcely needed, as the full moon was now sailing above in an unclouded sky, and the view up and down Elk river was quite extended.

A full half-hour was occupied in the supper, at the termination of which the pipes were produced. With scarcely an exception, the mouths of the trappers began issuing such volumes of smoke as to make it seem that the entire party were wrapped in a misty cloud.

Mackintosh produced a case of cigars, inviting Nick to join him, but the hunter declined.

"It ain't often I smoke, but when I do, I don't care about chawing terbacker at the same time."

"And I never smoked or chewed at all," added Ned, whereupon the Scotchman replaced his case, with a word of commendation for the lad.

With the taking of their pipes by the trappers, their tongues seemed to be unloosed, and a perfect Babel of talk and chatter raged for a time. There was a fine flow of animal spirits upon the part of all, and many a jest and joke enlivened the intercourse around the camp-fire.

These were hardy men, toughened by the terrible winters of the North-west, by the tempestuous violence of the regions of the Saskatchewan and Mackenzie. They had tramped on snow-shoes along the coasts of Ungava and James' bay, and over rivers where a dozen feet of solid ice intervened between them and the crystal waters beneath.

This was a sort of holiday to them. The unusually severe winter had ended and the spring had fairly set in. The ice had left the streams, and the deep blue of the sky indicated the approach of mild weather. There was a crisp coldness of the air, especially in the morning and evening, which made the warmth of camp-fire and blanket very agreeable.

But the weather was just the thing for active exertion and exercise, and it would not have been changed by any member of the party, had he been given the power to do so.

During the cold months that had just ended, the agents of the great fur companies of the North-west had been busy catching the numerous fur-bearing animals of that territory. With the opening of spring, these were being gathered in, while others were making a tour among the Indians further south, to purchase all that could be procured of them.

An hour's rest, and the signal was given to start again.

Only a few minutes were required for every thing to be placed in the canoes, when they shoved out into the stream. As before, the canoe of Mackintosh took the lead, Nick Whiffles sitting in the front, the Scotchman next, while Ned and Calamity took positions in the rear of them.

The long, sweeping paddles were dipped deep in the water, and the boats glided forward with that easy, swift motion which is seen when a vessel is under the control of skilled oarsmen.

The round, full moon, shining in an unclouded sky, was directly overhead, so that the somber forests threw only a narrow strip of shadow along the shore.

The men did not sing, as was their usual custom when sweeping along in this manner, but their pull was as steady and uniform as though they were keeping time with the motion of some "director" elevated above their heads.

The consciousness that they were in a territory with an air of hostility about it, was the cause of this. When there was no certainty but what the crack of a hostile rifle might be heard at any moment, there was no disposition on the part of the men to make their location known to any lurking foe.

All seemed impressed with the solemnity of the scene, and Nick Whiffles and Mackintosh conversed only at intervals, and then in tones so low that no one else comprehended the words uttered. Even Ned, with his arm thrown affectionately over Calamity, appeared lost in meditation. Perhaps the strange questioning of the Scotchman had again called up those shadowy imaginings of which he had spoken; perhaps his mind was running back to that vague period that preceded his falling into his hands; and he saw once more the tall houses, and the beautiful face bending over him, as he saw them in dreams and reveries, when alone upon his couch, or in the vast wilderness that had so long been his home.

Several miles were passed in this manner, and the surface of the Elk river was as smooth as a mirror, except where the swift-cutting canoes and the long, sweeping paddles rippled the water.

Suddenly Nick Whiffles felt some one grasp his arm, and turning, he encountered the pale face of Mackintosh, who, pointing ahead and down-stream, said, in an agitated whisper:

"Look yonder! What do you see?"

Looking in the direction indicated, Nick saw what, without any effort of the imagination, might be termed a "spirit canoe."

Several hundred yards ahead was a small Indian canoe, in which was seated the figure of a woman apparently motionless. The boat and its occupant were both of a snowy-white color, and seemed to have risen from the bed of the river.

The crews of the two large boats had discerned it at the same moment, and, by one impulse, all stopped rowing, while they gazed in breathless amazement upon the scene.

"What could it mean?" Was it a warning from the spirit world? Was it a human being? Had one or even two of these trappers, without any other companions, seen this vision, as it from the presence of the Evil One himself, but with a score of hardy, brave men, they felt too much courage to flee in fear, although every member of the party was impressed with a strange, chilling sensation at the singular sight.

The fact that every living member of the company saw it distinctly and unmistakably, prevented any thing like ridicule or jesting.

"Have you ever seen it before?" asked Mackintosh.

"Yes," replied Nick, gazing steadfastly at it. "What is it?"

"The Phantom Princess!"

"What's that? I never heard of it until tonight."

"You know what the critter is, then, as well as I do."

"Have you ever spoken to it?"

"Yes—but it never answered; I've see'd it, but I never could get any nearer than we are now."

"There is a mystery about it, certainly," added Mackintosh, as if speaking to himself, and then turning about so as to face his men, he spoke in a cheery voice:

"Fall to, boys; if you can overtake that creature, I'll divide fifty pounds between you, when we get back to the fort."

The courageous words of their leader acted like magnetism upon the trappers; their paddles were dipped by one impulse, and the two heavy canoes sped forward as if rowed by the great crew of the Tyne.

Mackintosh leaned forward and peered at the white canoe and its ghostly occupant.

"Do you think we can catch her?" he asked, in a whisper, of Nick.

"No," was the reply; "there ain't a human livin' that can do it."

"We can try it, at any rate."

"S'pose you do; if you go to put your arms about her, she'd go up in the air, and that would be the last of her."

"I am not as superstitious as you, Nick; I think she is real life and blood, and we are going to unravel a curious mystery."

At the end of ten minutes, it was plain that the "Phantom Princess" was as far away as when first discovered. Mackintosh spoke sharply to his men, and they bent every energy to the work; the water foamed at the figures in a panorama. The trappers were toiling as they had never toiled before. What boat could keep pace with them?

"We must overhaul her, Nick!" he added, peering forward again; "we are gaining; I am sure of it—WHAT?"

"What did I tell you?"

The white canoe and the Phantom Princess had vanished!

(To



"No, no, it must not! You must prevent it!" she cried, with passionate eagerness.

Mr. Sherman looked at her wonderingly as he lifted his hat to say adieu.

"A strange girl!" he muttered to himself. It was something new to see one so ready to renounce a fortune—to abdicate power.

"She must love the young man!" was his judgment, as he went back slowly to his sanctum. "No woman alive, who was not in love, would have done as she has done!"

That same evening Mr. Claude Hamilton called at General Marsh's house, and sent up his card with a request that Miss Weston would favor him with an interview. She returned a message, begging to be excused from appearing, on account of indisposition. She thought, that he should come to think her for her agency in restoring his rights; but she could not bear his thanks, so, in spite of Ruhama's remonstrances, she refused to see him.

#### CHAPTER XVII. THE FAITHFUL NEGRESS.

WEARILY enough sped the hours and the days to the forlorn prisoner.

The scanty streaks of light admitted by the crevices in the planks at the windows sufficed to bring out more forcibly the gloom of the noisome den in which she lay; the air was close and suffocating; the sounds that came from rooms below, of coarse oaths and drunken revelry, terrified her. Many times she started from sleep in affright, supposing that the heavy, hurried footsteps on the stairs were those of men who would presently burst into her room. She could only hide her face, and pray for deliverance; and stop her ears to keep out the hideous language in which Mrs. Hassel's lodgers and guests habitually indulged.

She rose unrefreshed; and her first effort was to move some of the fastenings of the window; not with a view of escape, but to relieve the agonizing pressure on her burning forehead.

Alas! she only exhausted herself in vain efforts. Her fragile strength could accomplish nothing. Then she bathed her head in the small quantity of water placed in a tin basin for her use; and then turned to the plate of breakfast set in the room while she was dozing. The tea was cold; but she managed to swallow part of it; but could not bring herself to touch the uninviting food. Dizzy with the pain in her head, she flung herself again on the bed, protected by her cloak and shawl from the soiled and ill-smelling bedclothing.

When her jailer came in with her dinner, about one o'clock, Elodie besought her, with piteous entreaties, to enlarge the opening at the window that there might be a free circulation of air.

"I feel as if my senses would leave me with this splitting headache," was her complaint.

"And whose fault is it, I'd like to know!" cried the beldame. "You've only to say you'll obey your uncle, and you will be taken away, and have a home as splendid as you can desire! I have no patience with such obstinate pride!"

"It is not pride!" wailed the sufferer. "You don't think your own cousin good enough for you to marry!"

The girl sobbed out an entreaty to be spared violent words, that cut through her brain. Only a little fresh water, if she could not have air.

The woman, after a volley of abuse, flung out of the room, slamming the door so as to give the poor patient a terrible shock. She brought in a pail of fresh water, but accompanied it with renewed curses on the stubbornness of her charge.

"I thought you'd 'a' been out of this today!" she exclaimed, angrily. "If you're like to plague me with the care of you much longer, you needn't look for much waitin' on, I can tell you."

"I wish I could die!" sobbed the girl. "I wish you would, and there would be an end of trouble!" retorted the virago. "I shall tell Rashleigh, if you're to stay longer, he must hire somebody to tend on you! What he gave don't half pay me for the room."

Elodie lifted herself up. "You shall be well paid, if you will let me go," she said, with a gleam of hope.

But the woman only laughed.

"You don't come it over me that way," she cried. "I know what you can do, and what you can't."

Finding that her reproaches were answered only by groans, she left the prisoner to her solitude.

But when, each time the meal was removed, she found it wholly untouched, when she heard low moans and mutterings of delirium—so it seemed to her—instead of articulate speech, from the unfortunate girl, she began to be uneasy.

She did not want her to die in her house. The inquiry that would follow, and the inquest, would involve her in trouble. Nor did she want her to have an illness, perhaps infectious, that would compel her to call in other help, or to send her only servant to attend her.

Rashleigh, strangely enough, had not returned, and a message sent to his lodgings had not found him. On the third day, therefore, the woman took into the captive's room a hatchet for the purpose of enlarging the aperture at the window.

Elodie was lying quiet, apparently in a doze, but was awakened by the noise of splitting the plank. This was done in a few minutes, making an opening as large as one of the panes of glass. The shawl was further opened by being drawn down from the top, and the cool, fresh air came in.

The girl's untasted breakfast stood beside the bed. Mrs. Hassel gruffly bade her eat it. "I cannot, indeed, I cannot!" was the feeble answer. "But I shall feel better, now I can have the air. If you would only give me more cold water!"

With grumbling the woman complied.

She noticed that the girl's cheeks were scarlet, and her eyes bright with fever.

"A pretty business I am like to have," she muttered, as she descended. "She will have a relapse, to a certainty. And a doctor will have to be called in! I will go myself for Rashleigh, and tell him to take her away."

Rashleigh had been arrested and remanded for examination, on the charge of kidnapping a young lady with felonious intent. At that stage of the inquiry no bail was admitted, notwithstanding his declaration that the girl had escaped from him, and he knew not where she was.

Elodie rose, dreadfully weakened as she was, to bathe her head and neck in the cold water. She could not eat. But she managed, with difficulty, to drag herself to the window, where she could look out at the opening.

It was a sorry view, the dirty, small rear yard, choked with heaps of rubbish, with the grimy walls of yards belonging to houses in the next street. A strong, sickening odor

came up from the garbage below. But the sunlight, and the rifts of blue sky seen at a distance, were refreshing.

A woman came out with a basket of wet clothes, and began to hang them on a line. Elodie saw by her hands and bare arms that she was a colored woman.

Two or three times the woman went back and returned with more wet garments, before Elodie caught a glimpse of her face. When she did, she started up wildly, and beat at the window, with a cry of:

"Nelly! Oh, Nelly! Nelly!"

The woman stopped and looked around her, not knowing whence the cry came. Then it occurred to Elodie that to call her in the hearing of her jailer would be to defeat her chance of communicating with her.

She snatched up a cambric handkerchief and waved it from the opening in the window. Then she rolled it into a ball, and flung it as far as she could in Nelly's direction.

The handkerchief had her full name written in a corner. The girl saw Nelly pick it up, and read the name, then kiss it eagerly, and look toward her.

Elodie's face was at the opening, and she made a gesture of caution by putting her finger on her lips. Nelly answered by a silent signal that she understood her.

In a few minutes the captive heard a stealthy step approaching her door. Applying her ear to the keyhole, she caught the low whisper:

"All right, honey; I'll come to ye directly, when the missis is gone out."

Content with this, and full of new hope, the girl sat down and tried to collect her thoughts sufficiently to decide what should be done.

First, she drew from her pocket a small memorandum-book, with a pencil, and wrote clearly on one of the leaves the address of Wyndham Blount's house and office. On another she scrawled a brief note, imploring him to come and save her, before her reason should be overturned in the dreary discomforts of her captivity. He must not lose a moment; or Rashleigh would hide her away where they could never find her.

Her head ached so fearfully, she could not sit up a moment longer. With a thanksgiving and a prayer, she again threw herself on the couch, holding her forehead, on which she had laid a handkerchief dipped in cold water, and listening for the step of her friend and deliverer.

It was more than an hour and a half before she heard again the stealthy step. This time her name was pronounced in a loud tone.

She started up and staggered to the door. The paroxysm of fever had returned, and she controlled her movements with difficulty.

"Oh, Nelly!" she wailed, in answer to the call; "take me out! I shall die here!"

"I cannot open the door, honey. I have looked for the key; the missus must have taken it when she went to market. No other key opens this door but the one!"

"Oh, Nelly! What shall be done! Cannot you break the door open?"

"I dare not try, Miss Elodie! Miss Hassel may come back any minute! She would strangle me if she knew I was speakin' to ye! She's an awful woman!"

"Nelly, I cannot live long, shut up here! You must bring some one to help me!"

"Shall I call the police, honey? But the missus would tell them her lies! She told me she had a sick niece up-stairs, just come from the country; and said how her fever was catching, and I mustn't go near her. She'd wallop me if she knew I came up-stairs."

"Nelly, I will show a paper under the door; can you get it?"

"All right, I've got it, Miss."

"You must go to that place; it's my guardian's—"

"Hi—de young gentleman who came to see your aunt Letty—"

"Nelly, please don't lose any time! Take a carriage and drive there! I have no money, but Mr. Blount will pay for it! Feel him back with you! Do be quick! I bring as if I were going to die! I don't want to die in this horrible place!"

"I'll go directly, honey. I'll not wait for the missus to mind the house!"

"Don't wait an instant! I will take care of you, Nelly. You shall go with me."

In five minutes the faithful woman had left the house. Elodie sunk into unconsciousness as the fever rose.

Mrs. Hassel was furious, on her return, to find the house deserted. After calling Nelly at the top of her voice, she ran to the door of the room where her prisoner lay, and turned the key in no little trepidation.

The sick girl lay on the couch burning with fever, and drawing her panting breath like sobs. The woman gave no heed to her sad condition, in her relief to find she had not escaped during her absence. She spoke to her, but received no answer. Then she went out again, and looked the door, muttering threats against her servant, who had gone out without leave, not for the first time.

Not more than two hours afterward, when the virago's rage was beginning to give way to serious alarm, she saw a carriage stop at the front door. A young gentleman descended, followed by two police officers. The door-bell rung violently.

The woman was obliged to open the door. "Where is the young lady who has a prisoner here?" demanded Wyndham Blount.

"A young lady! How you frightened me! There's no young lady here."

Blount made a signal to the officers, one of whom arrested Mrs. Hassel, calling her by name.

"You will see, madam, the game is up. Where is the girl who was kidnapped by Benet Rashleigh, and brought here on Friday night?"

"Rashleigh!" The woman began with abuse of him; she would not answer for any of his dirty practices; not she!

"The young lady was here two hours ago. Show the room where she is, or it will be worse for you!"

"There is only Mr. Rashleigh's niece; he brought her here sick, and asked me to board her till he could take her home. She is not a young lady; but a poor girl!"

"Show us the room!"

The beldame was compelled to obey.

"Do you commonly lock your boarders in their rooms, madam?" asked one of the officers, as the woman reluctantly produced the key.

She muttered something about being afraid the sick girl would walk out in her delirium and fall down the stairs.

"Or throw herself out of the window, I suppose!" mocked the man—notice the barracking window, as the door was thrown open.

"She'll have to go under lock and key for this, herself," observed the other officer, with a sneer.

The beldame broke into the violent execrations and abuse such women use when driven to bay. She threatened to tear out the eyes of her captors.

The officer answered by quietly slipping a pair of handcuffs over her wrists.

Meanwhile Wyndham had lifted in his arms the insensible form on the couch.

Elodie opened her glazed eyes, and looked in his face; but she knew him not. She spoke, but her utterance was only the low moaning of delirium.

Wyndham bade one of the officers help him carry her, wrapped in her cloak and shawl, down-stairs and out to the carriage. He Mrs. Hassel's arrest, led her to the police-placed her tenderly within it, supporting her in his arms, and ordered the driver to go to his mother's house.

The two officers, who held the warrant for court, from which she was consigned to a lodging in the Tombs.

#### CHAPTER XVIII. LOVE'S MAZES CLEARED.

FOR many days and nights lay Elodie unconscious of all around her, while the brain-fever that had seized upon her ran its fearful course.

Olivia Weston obeyed the summons to her bedside, and took up her abode in Mrs. Blount's house. It was her only comfort to be useful to others.

Ruhama came every day to inquire after the invalid. And more than once Emily St. Clare came to watch at night over the poor girl she learned to love, pitying her so profoundly.

One evening Rashleigh came later than usual, and it was nearly dusk when Olive went into the parlor to meet her.

"I have the doctor's permission," whispered Mrs. Marsh, "to take a look at poor Elodie. I will run up to her room for a few minutes. She vanished as she spoke."

As Olive turned, she found both her hands seized by a gentleman who had come in with her friend, but whom she had not at first seen. It was Claude Hamilton.

Olivia had carefully avoided him, and they had not met since the will had been found and restored to Sherman.

He led the trembling girl to a seat at one end of the room, still retaining her hand.

She drew it away gently, as she tried to utter a congratulation, which she felt to be his due.

"I owe everything to you, Olive," he began; "but—"

"It was my rash act that brought trouble on you," she faltered; "I was bound to seek a remedy when the opportunity occurred so providentially."

"I owe you heartfelt gratitude; for *all* you did was for my benefit. But—Olive—I cannot avail myself of a will which is not Mrs. Stanley's latest one; which does not express her last wishes."

"It thrilled her to the heart to be called 'Olive' by him; but she answered, with such forced calmness as to appear cold:

"Mr. Hamilton, you must not carry too far your chivalric notions. Mrs. Stanley meant you, and you alone, to be her heir."

"Not me alone; you know she did not."

"Why will you pain me by allusions?" Again he caught her hand.

"Would to Heaven," he exclaimed, impetuously, "you would let me shield you from all pain, Olive. I can only accept this fortune if you will share it with me!"

"Mr. Hamilton! I had never the slightest claim on Mrs. Stanley's bounty! You know I had not. It was a mistake that caused her last—"

Claude interrupted her, clasping her hand warmly, and speaking in tones that went to her very soul.

"She made no mistake, Olive, in thinking that I loved you with all my heart! I do love you! I have always loved you—you only—and my life will be wretched if you refuse to bless it with your love!"

By an effort the girl released her hand, and hid the starting tears.

"I have been a fool, dearest! I own it! I fled from the sight of you so many months since because I thought you despised me. When I returned, I interpreted your coldness to mean utter aversion. It was only within a day or two that I learned by how gross a blunder I had been deprived of the chance of receiving your answer to my letter. Olive, my love! I have suffered for it! Can you not forgive me?"

She lifted her face.

"Is it possible? Are you not engaged to Miss Monelle?"

"I have never been engaged to any one. I have never loved any one but you, Olive! I have feared that you disliked me. I have been most unhappy! Tell me you have not avoided me as you have done, because you disliked me!"

"I never disliked you!"

"Can you love me, Olive? May I hope to gain your love, if I have never had it? Will you pardon all my folly and stupidity?"

The girl could not speak; but she put her hand in her lover's. It was answer enough.

This time Claude not only imprisoned her hand, but clasped her to his breast, and pressed the kiss of betrothal on her lips.

For an hour they sat together, and the twilight deepened into night. Olive started as the door was opened, letting in a flood of light from the hall.

Ruhama entered, came up to them, and, seeing how it was, kissed Olive, with tears in her eyes. "May you be happy!" she murmured.

She went out with Claude; and Olive sought her own room, to vent her emotion in happy tears. In an hour she went to resume her watch by Elodie's bedside.

The suffering girl had the attendance of the best physicians in the city; but their skill availed little in the struggle with disease. Life and death battled for her; and that life won the victory, was owing, under God's blessing, to her vigorous youthful constitution.

Wyndham took his share in the night-watches, and he was with her when the crisis came. The morning sun sent its first golden shimmer to play on the wall, and the fresh morning breeze came in caressingly, when Elodie opened her eyes, to which intelligence had returned, and fixed them on the face bending over her. Olive had come in and stood beside Wyndham.

"Dear guardian!" the patient softly murmured.

"You must not talk!" he answered, pressing her hand. "We are so thankful that you will be spared to us."

Elodie closed her eyes in a peaceful sleep, and he stole softly out of the room.

When strength returned, the invalid begged to know how she came there; she remembered only the horrible prison in which she had been immured.

What need to prolong the details of our story? The usurper, Richard Lumley, was speedily dispossessed, and Claude Hamilton put the house through a course of cleansing before

it was ready for his occupancy. Olive did not refuse his petition for a speedy marriage, and her pupil, Elodie, was permitted to be her bridesmaid at a quiet and simple wedding in church.

Nelly was cared for by the friends of the girl she had aided to rescue. And she had saved more, for inside a silken sash given the woman by the late Mrs. Rashleigh, she had found, stitched carefully, the long missing certificate of the marriage of Elodie's parents.

Her aunt had taken this means of saving it from her brutal husband, and had forgotten it, supposing it in the box she gave Wyndham. Thus her title to the property was undisputed.

Rashleigh and his sister-in-law were tried and punished, their crime being proved. The man served out a term in State Prison.

Elodie completed her education under the best private tutors; but never cherished her former dreams of musical celebrity. Her voice had lost something of its power, but she retained sufficient to charm the domestic circle, and the friends who gathered round them.

As the wife of Wyndham Blount, she never again wished to figure as a candidate for public applause.

#### THE END.

A very splendid and powerful love story, by Mrs. MARY REED CROWELL, will soon be commenced, viz.: "Vials of Wrath; or, A Grave Between Them"—one of the most deeply interesting and exciting serials that has appeared for a long time.

## Sports and Pastimes.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

### BASE-BALL. THE PROFESSIONAL ARENA.

PRACTICALLY the great race for the professional championship of 1876 is ended, there being no doubt now of the ultimate success of the Boston "Red Stockings," the winners of the championship for the present year. Consequently, already there is a decline in the interest which centered on the contest, and the attention of the base-ball public is now called to the preparations already in progress for the coming campaign of the Centennial year of 1876, the indications now being such as to ensure for that year the greatest furor for base-ball playing ever known in the history of the game. The number of professional organizations it is proposed to place in the arena next year are tenfold greater than has ever before been thought of even. In fact there is not a prominent city North, East and West which does not propose to have its representative professional club in the field in 1876. In view of this important fact it behooves the officers of the present Professional Association to take some preliminary action looking to the introduction of some rule of membership of the National Association which will limit the contestants in the championship arena next season to such clubs as will be in a position to carry out their campaign programme to the close of the season. Certainly the entries for the race for the championship should be limited to regular club company organizations, all co-operative clubs being excluded. If any one thing has been conclusively proved by the experience of the season's play of 1875, it has been that co-operative professional clubs are in every respect organizations damaging to the best interests of the Professional National Association. They have plainly been shown to be little else than schools where the worst evils of professional play are nursed and supported. Managers of such combinations have no control over their players, they have no command of funds sufficient to defray the expenses incidental to the carrying out of their season's work, and they only act as barriers to the successful work of the regular stock company clubs. The time of the regular stock company clubs has come to let this class of professional clubs run their machines alone, just as the amateur gate-money clubs do, and to limit the entries for the annual race for the pennant to the regularly established stock base-ball organizations, such as the Boston, Hartford, Athletic, St. Louis and Chicago clubs.

#### THE RECORD OF SEPTEMBER.

September closed with a smaller record of games played in the professional arena than in any previous month of the season. The average, too, was not up to the mark of that of August, the average figure for winning nines being eight runs to a game, instead of seven as in August.

The record of the best games played in September is as follows:

Sept. 14, Hartford vs. Chicago, at Chicago.....	11
Sept. 18, Hartford vs. St. Louis, at St. Louis.....	30
Sept. 23, Philadelphia vs. St. Louis, at St. Louis.....	32
Sept. 23, Boston vs. Hartford, at Boston (ex.).....	41
Sept. 27, Mutual vs. New Haven, at Brooklyn.....	42
Sept. 23, Philadelphia vs. Chicago, at Chicago.....	50
Sept. 23, St. Louis vs. Philadelphia, at Cincinnati.....	51
Sept. 9, Hoboken vs. Philadelphia, at Philadelphia.....	54
Sept. 15, Philadelphia vs. Athletic, at Philadelphia.....	54
Sept. 27, St. Louis vs. Philadelphia, at St. Louis.....	55
Sept. 11, St. Louis vs. Hartford, at Hartford.....	60
Sept. 23, Boston vs. Hartford, at Hartford.....	60
Sept. 4, Athletic vs. Boston, at Philadelphia.....	63
Sept. 6, Mutual vs. Atlantic, at Brooklyn.....	82
Sept. 7, Hartford vs. St. Louis, at St. Louis.....	82
Sept. 8, Boston vs. Mutual, at Brooklyn.....	85
Sept. 23, Hartford vs. Mutual, at Brooklyn (ex.).....	86
Sept. 23, New Haven vs. Mutual, at Brooklyn.....	88
Sept. 2, Boston vs. Philadelphia, at Philadelphia.....	88
Sept. 6, Boston vs. Philadelphia, at Philadelphia.....	94
Sept. 23, Philadelphia vs. St. Louis, at St. Louis.....	95

Some better play may be looked for in October, as there will be quite a struggle for second and third position.

#### THE AMATEUR ARENA.

The Amateur National Association will find its most important subject for legislative action at its next session to be a remedy for the existing and growing evil of "revolving," which has far outreached this season any previous progress it had made in amateur organizations. Nearly half the leading contests among amateur clubs in the middle States during September were played by picked nines under the name of club teams. The result has been that all the interest which would naturally accrue from the rivalry between legitimate club nines has been lost, and quarrels, disputes and dissensions have multiplied to a surprising extent.

Some fine play has been exhibited in the amateur arena during September, as the appended record of the leading amateur contests of the month fully shows, the number of "model" games played being largely in excess of any previous month known in the annals of the game.

#### AMATEUR NINES' RECORD FOR SEPTEMBER.

Sept. 29, Nassau vs. Union, at Unionville (13).....	20
Sept. 21, Cataract vs. Eckford, at Melrose.....	21
Sept. 21, Flyaway vs. Cricket, at Bingham (10).....	23
Sept. 21, Hoboken vs. Olympic, at Paterson, N.J.....	32
Sept. 9, Ludlow vs. Red Sox, at Louisville, Ky.....	32
Sept. 10, Live Oak vs. Star, at Rome, N.Y.....	41
Sept. 21, Mutual vs. Leather Stocking, at Loudon.....	41
Sept. 2, Star vs. Ludlow, at Covington (10).....	43
Sept. 6, Active vs. Expert, at Reading, Pa.....	43
Sept. 3, Star vs. Randolph, at Dover, N.J.....	43
Sept. 21, Eagle vs. National, at Washington, D.C.....	42
Sept. 15, Carbondale vs. Cricket, at Bingham.....	50
Sept. 13, Resolute vs. Mountain City, at Altoona.....	51
Sept. 16, Cincinnati vs. Ludlow, at Cincinnati.....	51
Sept. 18, Zephyr vs. Parkman, at Boston.....	51
Sept. 9, Chicago vs. Cincinnati, at Cincinnati.....	52
Sept. 23, Cincinnati vs. Ludlow, at Cincinnati.....	53
Sept. 13, Philadelphia vs. Tuba, at Philadelphia.....	53

Sept. 13, Peabody vs. Creger, at Gloucester, N.J.....	61
Sept. 17, Olympic vs. Chelsea, at Brooklyn.....	61
Sept. 30, Flyaway vs. Olympic of N.Y., at B'klyn.....	61
Sept. 29, Resolute vs. T. B. at Bridgeport, Ct.....	62
Sept. 25, Lowell vs. Rollstone, at Lowell, Mass.....	62
Sept. 11, Highway vs. Mountain City, at Altoona.....	62
Sept. 11, Star vs. Cincinnati, at Covington, Ky.....	63
Sept. 6, Coon vs. Archer, at Philadelphia, Ky.....	63







## MAGDALEN.

BY EREN E. REKFOR.

Down the dark street, in the swift-falling snow,  
Wanders a woman with eyes full of woe;  
White is her face in the desolate night;  
Oh, would to God that her soul was as white!  
Hither and thither she roams, while the storm  
Smiles cruel hands on her silvering form;  
Young as the years go, with sorrow so old,  
Homeless and friendless, and out in the cold.

Sometimes she stops where a light glimmers far  
Into the darkness, as though it were a star;  
She sees the warm fires ablaze on the hearth,  
And hears, like one dreaming, the music and mirth

Which belongs to a world that is further away  
From the world that she lives in, than darkness  
from day.

And she thinks, when these glimpses of sweet  
home are given,  
The gates are ajar, and she sees into Heaven.

She shrinks from the sight, as if struck by a blow,  
When she sees a warm kiss on a face pure as snow,  
And she shivers and moans in the storm of the night,  
And wanders away from the woe-mocking light.

For the outcast like her, there's no home but the street,  
No kind words, no pity, no kisses to meet.  
Homeless and friendless, and wild with her pain,  
She turns and is lost in the shadow again.

Out in the cold, but the cold of the streets  
Chills not her heart like the faces she meets.  
Women who weep for such woes, at the play,  
Pass her with scorn in their eyes every day.

Men pass her with a smile and a snarl;  
She's nothing to hope for, and all things to fear.  
Ah! but the wolf of destruction is bold,  
And the outcasts are weak who are out in the cold.

Oh, women and men, how your tender hearts stir  
With pity to hear of an outcast like her.  
But you meet her next day, and the sight of her  
Is as little to you as the last fall of snow.

Little wonder she's lost when you help thrust her  
down  
In the swift-rushing river of ruin to drown.

Ah, look to it, look to it, women and men,  
And remember your Christ, and the poor Mag-  
dalen!

## Erminie:

## THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,  
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-  
FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XV.

## "AFTER MANY DAYS."

"I will paint her as I see her.  
Ten times have the lilies blown  
Since she looked upon the sun."

—BROWNING.

AND TEN YEARS PASSED AWAY.

It was a joyous morning in early spring.  
From the pine woods came the soft twittering  
of innumerable birds, filling the air with melody;  
while the soft, fragrant odor of the tall,  
swinging pines came floating on every passing breeze.

The sun rose in unclouded splendor  
above the dark tree-tops, and the bright waves  
of the Chesapeake danced and flashed in the  
golden rays. No sound broke the deep, pro-  
found stillness of the wide, dry moor; no living  
thing, save now and then some solitary bird  
that skimmed along over the fern, was to be  
seen.

Far away in every direction nothing  
met the eye but the blue, unclouded sky above,  
and the black, arid barrens below, that lay hot  
and dry in the glare of the morning sunshine.

Suddenly the sylvan silence of the spot was  
broken by the clear, sweet notes of a hunting-  
horn, that startled the echoes far and near,  
and the next moment the forms of a horse and  
rider came dashing over the moor.

The horse was a splendid animal, a small,  
jet-black Arabian, with graceful, tapering  
limbs, arching neck, flowing mane, and small,  
erect head, and bright, fiery eyes. His rider  
was a young girl of some twelve years, who  
sat her horse like an Arab hunter, and whose  
dark, unique style of beauty merits a wider  
description.

She was very slight and rather tall for her  
age; but with a finely proportioned figure,  
displayed now to the best advantage by her well-  
fitting riding habit—which consisted of a skirt  
of dark-green cloth, a tight basque of black  
velvet. Her face was thin and dark and some-  
what elfish, but the olive skin was smooth as  
satin, and deepening with deepest crimson in  
the thin cheeks and lips. Her forehead was low,  
broad, and polished; her saucy little nose de-  
cidedly retroussée; her teeth like pearls, and her  
hands and feet perfect. And then her eyes—  
such great, black, lustrous, glorious eyes,  
through which at times a red light shone—such  
splendid eyes, valled by long, jetty, silken  
lashes, and arched by glossy black eyebrows,  
smooth and shining as water-leeches—eyes full  
of fun, frolic, freedom, and dauntless daring—  
eyes that would haunt the memory of the be-  
holder for many a day. Her hair, "woman's  
crowning glory," was of intense blackness,  
and clustered in short, dancing curls round  
her dark, bright, sparkling face. In the shade  
those curls were of midnight darkness, but in  
sunshine, red rings of fire shone through like  
tiny circlets of flame. She wore a small, black  
velvet hat, whose long sable plume just touch-  
ed her warm, crimson cheek.

Such was the huntress, who with a pistol  
stuck in her belt, a little red sash swung across her  
shoulder, dashed along over the moor, holding  
the bridle lightly in one hand, and swinging,  
jauntily, a silver-mounted riding whip in the  
other.

As she reached the center of the moor, she  
reined in her horse so suddenly that he nearly  
reared upright, and then, lifting her little  
silver bugle again to her lips, she blew a blast  
that echoed in notes of clearest melody far  
over the heath.

This time her signal was answered—a loud  
shout from a spirited voice met her ear, and in  
another instant another actor appeared upon  
the scene.

He, too, was mounted, and rode his horse  
well. He was a tall, slender strapping of about  
fifteen, and in some ways unlike the girl.  
He had the same dark complexion, the same  
fiery black eyes and hair; but there all resem-  
blance ceased. The look of saucy drollery on  
her face was replaced on his by a certain fierce  
pride—an expression at once haughty and dar-  
ing. He was handsome exceedingly, with  
regular, classical features, a perfect form, and  
had that mark of high birth, the small and  
exquisitely-shaped ear, and thin curving nos-  
tril. Erect he sat in his saddle, like a young  
prince of the blood.

"Bon matin, Monsieur Raymond!" shouted  
the girl, as he gallantly raised his cap and let  
the morning breeze life his dark locks. "I  
thought the sun would not find you in bed the  
first morning after your return home. How  
does your serene highness find yourself?"

"In excellent health and spirits. I'm very  
much obliged to you—as our friend Mr. Toosy-  
pegs would say," answered Master Raymond,  
for he it was, as he laughingly rode up beside  
her. "Where's Ranty?"

"In bed. That fellow's as lazy as sin, and  
would rather lie there, sleeping like some old  
grampus, than enjoy a ride over the hills the  
finest morning that ever was."

"How do you know grampuses are fond of  
sleeping?" said Raymond.

"How do I know?" said the girl, in a high  
key, getting somewhat indignant. "I know  
very well they are! Doesn't Miss Toosy-pegs,  
when she's talking about Orlando sleeping in  
the morning, always say he's 'snoring like a  
grampus' and if Miss Priscilla doesn't know,  
that's been to England, and every place else, I  
would like to know who does!"

"Well, I've been to England, too," said  
Raymond.

"Yes, and a great deal of good it's done  
you!" said the young lady, contemptuously.

"But that's the way always. Ever since  
Ranty and you went to college, you've got so  
stuck up, and full of Latin and Greek, and  
stuff, there's no standing either of you. Last  
night, Ranty had to go and ask aunt Deb for  
the bootjack in Latin, and when she couldn't  
understand him, he went round kicking the  
cat and my nine beautiful kittens, in the most  
awful manner that ever was; and swearing at  
her in Greek—the lawful wretch!"

And Miss Petronilla Lawless scowled at Ray-  
mond, who laughed outright.

"Oh! come now, Pet, don't be angry!" he  
said. "Where's the use of quarrelling the very  
first morning we meet?"

"Quarrelling!" repeated Miss Pet, shortly;  
"I'm sure I don't want to quarrel; but you're  
so aggravating. Boys always are just the  
hatefulest things!"

"Most hateful, Miss Lawless," amended  
Raymond, gravely. "There's a great deal of  
good sense but bad grammar in that sentence.  
I don't like boys myself half so well as I do  
girls—for instance, you're worth a dozen of  
Ranty."

"Yes; you say so now, when Ranty ain't  
listening; but if you wanted to go off on  
some mischief or other, I guess you wouldn't  
think of me. But that's the way I'm al-  
ways treated, pitched round like an old shoe,  
without even daring to say a word for my-  
self."

This melancholy view of things, more par-  
ticularly the idea of Miss Pet's not having a  
"word to say for herself," struck Raymond so  
so inexpressibly ludicrous, that he gave vent  
to a shout of laughter.

"Yes, you may laugh!" said Pet, indignantly;  
"but it's true, and you ought to be  
ashamed of yourself, making fun of people in  
this way. I am not going to stand being im-  
posed upon much longer, either! If Miss Pris-  
cilla keeps snubbing and putting down Mr.  
Toosy-pegs all the time, that ain't no reason  
why I'm to be snubbed and put down too—is  
it?"

"Why, Pet, what's the matter with you this  
morning?" exclaimed Raymond. "I never  
knew you so cross; has the judge scolded you,  
or have you bagged no game, or has your pony  
cast a shoe, or—"

"No, none of them things has happened!"  
broke in Pet, crossly. "I suppose you'd keep  
on or, or-ing till doomsday, if I let you!"

"I'm worse still, and I wouldn't mind much if I  
shot 'ye on the spot!" said Pet, in a tone of  
such deep desperation that Raymond looked at  
her in real alarm.

"Why, Pet, what has happened?" he in-  
quired, anxiously. "Nothing really serious, I  
hope."

"Yes, it is really serious. I'm going to be  
sent to school—there now!" said Pet, as near  
crying as an elf could be.

"Oh! is that all?" said Raymond, immeasur-  
ably relieved. "Well, I don't see anything so  
very dreadful in that."

"Don't you, indeed?" exclaimed Pet, with  
flashing eyes. "Well, if there's anything  
more dreadful, I'd like to know what it is!  
To be cooped up in a great dismal dungeon of  
a schoolhouse from one year's end to 't'other,  
and never get a chance to sneeze without ask-  
ing leave first. I won't go, either, if I die for  
it!"

"And so you'll grow up and not know B  
from a cow's horn," said Raymond. "I am  
sure you need to go bad enough."

"I don't need it, either!" angrily retorted  
Pet. "I can read first-rate now, without spell-  
ing more than half the words; and write—I  
wish you could see how beautifully I can make  
some of the letters!"

"Oh! I saw a specimen yesterday—Minnie  
showed it to me—looked as if a hen had dipped  
her foot in an ink-bottle and clawed it over the  
paper."

"Why, you horrid, hateful, saucy—"  
"Abandoned, impertinent young man!" in-  
terrupted Raymond. "There! I've helped you  
out with it. And now look here, Pet, how do  
you expect to be raised to the dignity of my  
wife, some day, if you don't learn something?  
Why, when we are married, you'll have to  
make your mark!"

"I've a good mind to do that now with my  
whip!" exclaimed Pet, flourishing it in dan-  
gerous proximity to his head. "Your wife,  
indeed! I guess not! I'm to be a President's  
lady some day, Aunt Deb says. Catch me  
marrying you!"

"Well, that will be your loss. Where's the  
judge going to send you?"

"Why, he says to the Sacred Heart; but I  
ain't gone yet! I'd a heap sooner go to  
Judestown, with Minnie, to that school where  
all the boys and girls go together. Oh, Ray!  
there are just the nicest boys ever was there—  
especially one with the beautifullest red  
cheeks, and the loveliest bright buttons on his  
coat ever you seen!"

And Pet's eyes sparkled at the recollection.

"Who is he?" said Raymond, who did not  
look by any means so delighted as Pet fancied  
he should.

"His name's Bobby Brown; and only he's  
all as yellow as the yolk of an egg ever since  
he had the jaunders, he'd be real pretty. But  
I'm getting hungry, Ray. I'll race you to the  
cottage, and bet you anything I'll beat  
you!"

"Done!" cried Ray, catching the excitement  
now sparkling in the dark, brilliant face of  
the little fay beside him; and crushing his cap  
down over his thick curls, he bounded after her  
as she dashed away.

But Pet was better mounted, and the best  
rider of the two; and a ringing, triumphant  
laugh came borne tantalizingly to his ears as  
she distanced him by full twenty yards, and  
galloped up to the little white cottage on the  
Barrens.

"Fairly beaten!" he said, laughing, as he  
sprung off. "I am forced to own myself con-  
quered, though I hate to do it."

Though he laughed, his look of intense mor-  
tification showed how galling was defeat.

"Ahem! the dignity of my husband someday,  
if you don't learn to ride better! Why, when  
we're married, I'll have to give you lessons!"  
said Pet, demurely; though her wicked eyes  
were twinkling with irrepressible fun under  
their long lashes.

"Oh, I see!" said Ray, gayly. "Poetical  
justice, eh? Paying me in my own coin!  
Well, if you can beat me in riding, you can't  
in anything else!"

"Can't I, though?" said Pet, defiantly.

"Just you try target-shooting, or pulling a  
stroke oar with me, and you'll see! Schools  
where they teach you the Greek for bootjack  
ain't the best places for learning them sort of  
things, I reckon!"

The thunder of horse's hoofs had by this  
time brought another personage to the stage.

It was Erminie—"sweet Erminie," the little  
beauty, and heiress of a princely fortune and  
estate.

The promise of Erminie's childhood had been  
more than fulfilled. Wondrously lovely she  
was! How could the child of Lord Ernest Vil-  
liers and Lady Maude Percy be otherwise!  
She had still the same snowy skin of her in-  
fancy, softly and brightly tinged with the most  
delicate pink on the rounded cheeks; her face  
was perfectly oval, and almost transparent;  
her eyes were of the deepest, darkest violet  
hue; her long curls, that reached nearly to her  
waist, were long burnished gold, and the snow-  
white forehead and tapering limbs were per-  
fect. In spite of the difference between them,  
though one was dark and impetuous, the other  
fair and gentle, yet there was a resemblance  
between Raymond and Erminie. You could  
see it most plainly when they smiled; it was  
the smile of Lady Maude that lit up both faces  
with that strange, nameless beauty.

"Oh, Pet! I'm so glad you've come!" she  
joyfully exclaimed. "Guess who's here?"

"Who? Ranty?" said Pet.

"No, indeed. Mr. Toosy-pegs. He heard  
Ray was come, and rode over this morning to  
see him."

"Oh, I must see Mr. Toosy-pegs!" exclaimed  
Ray, laughing, as he bounded past the two  
girls, and sprang into the house.

It was a neat, pleasant little sitting-room,  
with white-muslin blinds in the windows, that  
were already darkened with vines; clean, straw  
matting on the floor, and chairs, table, and  
ceiling fairly glistening with cleanliness. There  
was a wide fireplace opposite the door, filled  
with fragrant pine-boughs, and sitting in a  
low rocking-chair of Erminie's, in the corner,  
was our old friend, Mr. O. C. Toosy-pegs, per-  
fectly unchanged in every respect since we  
saw him last.

"Why, Mr. Toosy-pegs, how do you do? I  
hope you have been quite well since I saw you  
last?" cried the spirited voice of Ray, as he  
grasped Mr. Toosy-pegs' hand and gave it a  
cordial shake.

"Thank you, Master Raymond, I've been  
quite well, I'm very much obliged to you,"  
said Mr. Toosy-pegs, wriggling faintly in his  
grasp. "So is Miss Toosy-pegs, so is Aunt Bob,  
and all the rest of the family—I'm very much  
obliged to you."

"Dogs and all, I hope, Orlando?" said Pet,  
as she entered.

"Yes, Miss Pet, the dogs are quite well, I'm  
obliged to you. I hope you feel pretty well  
yourself?"

"No, I ain't, then. I'm not well at all. I've  
been in a state of mind all the week, and  
there's no telling how long it may last."

"Good gracious! you don't say so!" said the  
alarmed Mr. Toosy-pegs. "It's not anything  
dangerous, I hope?"

"Well, people generally think the small-pox  
is dangerous," began Pet, with a sort of gloomy  
sternness, when she was interrupted by Mr.  
Toosy-pegs, who, seizing his hat, rushed to the  
door, shrieking out:

"The small-pox! Oh, my gracious! Why,  
Miss Pet, how could you go to come here, and  
give it to us all like this! Good gracious! for  
to think of being all full of holes like a potato-  
steamer!" said Mr. Toosy-pegs, wiping the cold  
perspiration off his face.

"But the small-pox ain't no circumstance to  
my trouble," went on Pet, as if she had never  
heard him. "I'm going to be sent to school!"

"Come back, Mr. Toosy-pegs; she hasn't got  
the small-pox," said Ray, laughing. "There is  
not the slightest danger, I assure you. Pet  
was only using an illustration that time."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Toosy-  
pegs, dropping into a chair and wiping his  
face with his handkerchief, "if you didn't  
pretty near scare the life out of me!"

"Well, you wouldn't be the first one I've  
scared the life out of!" said Pet, swinging her  
riding-whip. "I'm apt to astonish people now  
and then!"

"I should think so," said Ray. "Do you  
remember the night she coaxed you out sailing  
with her, Mr. Toosy-pegs, and upset the boat;  
and then added insult to injury by pulling you  
on shore by the hair of your head? That was  
an awful trick, Pet."

"I haven't got it out of my bones yet," said  
Mr. Toosy-pegs, mournfully. "I never ex-  
pected such treatment from Miss Pet, I'm sure,  
and I don't know what I had ever done to de-  
serve it."

"Well, don't be mad, Orlando. I'll never  
do it again," said Pet, in a deeply-penitent  
tone. "But, I say, Minnie, when are we going  
to have breakfast? I've an awful appetite this  
morning."

"In a moment. Hurry, Lucy," said Er-  
minie, as she entered the room.

"I was just up-stairs, bringing grandmother  
her breakfast."

"Hem! How is the old lady?" inquired  
Miss Pet.

"As well as usual. She hardly ever comes  
down-stairs now. Do hurry, Lucy. Miss Law-  
less will soon be starved, if you keep on so  
slowly!"

"Lor' sakes! I is hurryin', Miss Minnie,"  
said Lucy as she bustled in, drew out a small,  
round table, laid the cloth, and prepared to  
arrange the breakfast-service. "Spec' dat er  
little limb yinks folks ought to git up de night  
afore, to have breakfast ready time 'nuff for  
her," muttered Lucy to herself, looking dag-  
gers at Pet Lawless, who, swinging her riding-  
bat in one hand and her whip in the other,  
watched Lucy's motions with a critical eye.  
Erminie, with her sunny face and ready hands,  
assisted in the arrangements; and soon the  
whole party were assembled round the table,  
doing ample justice to Lucy's morning meal.

And while they were thus engaged, I shall  
claim your patience for a moment, read-  
er, while we cast a brief retrospective glance  
over the various changes that have occurred  
during those ten years.

By the kind care of good-natured Mr. Toosy-  
pegs, and his friend, Admiral Havenful, the  
gipsy Keturah had been amply provided for.  
As Raymond and Erminie grew up, they had  
been sent to Judestown to school, with the  
children of Judge Lawless, whose daughter,  
Miss Pet, has already been introduced to the  
reader. The dark, gloomy recluse, Keturah,  
was an object of dread and dislike to the nei-  
ghborhood around. She shunned and avoided  
them, lived her own inward life independent  
of them all, and was therefore hated by them.  
And when, about a year previous to the pre-  
sent time, she received of which she never  
fully recovered, very little sorrow was felt or  
expressed. Sweet, gentle little Erminie was,  
however, a favorite with all, and so was the  
bold, bright, high-spirited Raymond, to whom  
the somewhat eccentric old Admiral Havenful  
took such a fancy that he insisted on sending

him to college with his nephew, Ranty, or  
Randolph Lawless. To college, therefore, the  
boys went, and Erminie remained at the Bar-  
rens, and went every fine day to Judestown  
to the district school, sometimes, but very  
rarely, accompanied by Pet Lawless; for that  
wild young lady voted schools and school-  
teachers and "Committee men," unmitigated  
bores, all, and preferred her own "sweet will"  
and her pony Starlight to suffering through  
"readin', writin' and refmetic." In vain her  
father, the judge, stormed and threatened her  
with all sorts of calamities. Pet, metaphysi-  
cally speaking, snapped her finger in the face  
of all authority; and the more they wanted  
her to go, the more she wouldn't, though she  
did offer to do her best to learn if they would  
let her go with Ray and Ranty. But gaiters  
were things forbidden inside the college gates;  
and besides Ranty very ungallantly protested  
that all girls in general, and "our Pet" in par-  
ticular, were nothing but "pests," and that he  
wouldn't have her near him at any price.  
Master Ranty Lawless did not like the female  
persuasion, and once gruffly announced that  
his idea of heaven was, a place where boys  
could do as they liked, and where there were  
no girls. So as Pet had no mother to look af-  
ter her, and quenched it over the servants at  
home, she grew p pretty much as she liked,  
and was not far and near as the wildest,  
maddest, skip-over-the-moon madcap that ever  
threw a peaceable community into convul-  
sions.

This much being premised, it is only neces-  
sary to say that Ray and Ranty had returned  
from college for a few months' vacation, the  
day previous to the commencement of this  
chapter, and then go on with our story.

"When is Miss Priscilla coming over, Mr.  
Toosy-pegs?" asked Erminie, as she filled for  
the third time his cup with fragrant, golden  
coffee.

"Morrer evening," replied Mr. Toosy-pegs,  
speaking with his mouth full; "she's going to  
bring you a parcel of muslin things to work  
for her."

"The collar and caps she was speaking of,  
I guess," said Erminie, with her pleasant smile.

"How in the world, Erminie," exclaimed Pet,  
"do you find time to work for everybody? I  
never saw you a moment idle yet."

"Well, it is pleasant to be doing some-  
thing," said Erminie; "and besides, Miss Pris-  
cilla can't do fine sewing, her eyes are so weak,  
you know. I can't bear to sit still and do no-  
thing; I like to sew, or read, or something."

"Ugh! sewing is the most horrid thing," said  
Pet, with a shrug; "I don't mind reading a  
pretty story to pass time now and then; but  
to sit down and go stitch—stitch—stitching,  
for hours steady—well, I know I'd soon be in  
a strait-jacket if I tried it, that's all! I was  
reading a real nice book the other night."

"What was it?" asked Ray. "I should like  
to see the book you would like to read."

"Well, there ain't many I like, but, oh! this  
one was over so nice. It was all about a hat-  
ful old Jew who lent money to a man that  
wanted to go somewhere a-courting; and  
then this Jew wanted to cut off a pound of  
his flesh, to eat, I expect—the nasty old cannibal!  
And then this lady, I forget her name,  
came and dressed herself up in man's clothes,  
and got him—the fellow who went courting,  
you know—off somewhere. Oh, it was splen-  
did! I'll lend you the book, sometime, Min-  
nie."

"Why, it must have been the 'Merchant of  
Venice' you read," said Ray, "though such a  
jumbled up account of it as that, I never heard  
it go over for the book to-morrow and read it  
to Min, if she cares about hearing it."

Before Erminie could reply, a surprised ejacu-  
lation from Pet made her turn quickly round.  
Ray's eyes wandered in the same direction,  
while Mr. Toosy-pegs sprang from his seat in  
terror; thereby badly scalding himself with the  
hot coffee, at the sight which met his astonished  
eyes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## MASTER RANTY.

"A rare compound of oddity, frolic and fun."  
GOLDSMITH.

A LITTLE, old, decrepit woman, bent double  
with age, leaning on a staff, and shaking with  
palsy, stood as suddenly before them as if she  
had sprung up through the earth. Her dress  
was the most astonishing complication of rags  
that ever hung together on a human back be-  
fore. A long, old-fashioned cloak that, a hun-  
dred years before, had probably been all the  
rage, swept behind her; and as it trailed along,  
seemed in imminent danger of throwing the  
unfortunate old lady over her own head, every  
minute. A brown, sun-burned face, half hid  
in masses of coarse, gray hairs, peered  
wildly out; and from under a pair of bushy,  
overhanging, gray eyebrows, gleamed two  
keen, needle-like eyes, as sharp as two-edged  
stilettes. This singular individual wore a  
man's old beaver hat on her head, which was  
forcibly retained on that palsy-shaking mem-  
ber by a scarlet bandanna handkerchief passed  
over the crown, and tied under the chin.

Altogether, the little, stooping, unearthly-  
looking crone was one of the most singular  
sights that mortal eyes ever beheld.

So completely amazed were the whole as-  
sembly that for some five minutes they stood  
staring in silent wonder at this unexpected  
and most startling apparition. The little old  
woman, steadying herself with some diffi-  
culty on her cane, shaded her eyes with one hand,  
and peered at them with her sharp eyes.

"Don't be afraid, pretty ladies and gen-  
tlemen," said the little old lady, in a shrill, sharp  
falsetto. "I won't hurt none o' you, ef you  
behave yourselves. I guess I may come in!"

And suiting the action to the word, the lit-  
tle owner of the extraordinary head-dress hob-  
bled in, and composedly dumped herself down  
into the rocking-chair Mr. Toosy-pegs had late-  
ly vacated.

"Now, what in the name of Hecate and all  
the witches, does this mean?" exclaimed Pet,  
first recovering her presence of mind.

"It means that I'll take some breakfas', if  
you'll bring it down, Miss," said the little old  
woman, laying her formidable-looking stick  
across her lap; and favoring the company, one  
and all, with a prolonged stare from her keen,  
bright eyes.

"Well, now, that's what I call cool," said  
Pet, completely taken aback by the old wo-  
man's sang froid. "Perhaps your ladyship  
will be condescending enough to sit over here  
and help yourself?"

"No, thankee," squeaked her ladyship. "I'd  
rather have it here, if it's all the same to you.  
I ain't as smart as I used to was; and don't  
like to be getting up much. Perhaps t'other  
young gal wouldn't mind bringing it here,"  
she added, looking at the astounded Erminie.

Roused out of her trance of astonishment,  
not unmingled with terror, by claims of hos-  
pitality, Erminie hastened to comply; and  
placing a cup of fragrant coffee and some but-  
tered waffles on a light waiter, placed it on a  
chair within the old woman's reach.

That small individual immediately fell to,  
with an alacrity quite astonishing, considering

her size and age; and coffee and waffles in a  
remarkably short space of time were "among  
the things that were, but are no longer."



"I—I'm Orlando C. Toospegs, I—I'm very much obliged to you," stammered Mr. Toospegs, dodging behind Pet, in evident alarm.

"Young man, come over here," solemnly said the beldame, keeping her long finger pointed, as if about to take aim, and never removing her chain-lightning eyes from the pallid physiognomy of the unhappy Mr. Toospegs.

"Go, Horlander," said Pet, giving him an encouraging push. "Bear it like a man; which means, hold up your head, and take your finger out of your mouth, like a good boy. I'll stick to you to the last."

With chattering teeth, trembling limbs, bristling hair, and terror-stricken face, Mr. Toospegs found himself standing before the ancient sibyl, by dint of a series of pushes from the encouraging hand of Pet.

"Young man, wouldst thou know the future?" began the old woman, in a deep, stern, impressive voice.

"I—I—I—I'm very much obliged to you, Mrs. Two-Shoes," replied poor Mr. Toospegs. "It's real kind of you, I'm sure, and—"

"Vain mortal, spare thy superfluous thanks," interrupted the mysterious one, with a wave of her hand. "Dark and terrible is the doom of the man who dares to look upon the face of the pale-faces, and dogs will cease to bark, the stars in the firmament hold their breath, and even the poultry in the barnyard turn pale to hear it. Woe to thee, unhappy man! Better for thee somebody else had a millstone tied round his neck, and were plunged into the middle of a frog-pond, than that thou shouldst live to see that day."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated the horror-stricken Mr. Toospegs, wiping the cold drops of perspiration off his face, as the sibyl flourished her snuff-box in the air, as if invoking kindred spirits to come to her aid.

"Sublime oration!" exclaimed Ray, laughing inwardly.

"Live to see what day?" inquired Pet, whose curiosity was aroused. "The day he gets married, maybe."

"Awful will be the results that will follow that day," went on the seeress, scowling darkly at the irreverent Pet. "Tremendous clouds will flash vividly through the sky, the blinding thunder will show itself in all the colors of a dying dolphin, and a severe rain-storm will probably be the result. On thyself, oh, unhappiest of mortals, terrible will be the effects it will produce! These beautiful snuff-colored freckles will shake to their very center; these magnificent whiskers, which, I perceive, in two or three places show symptoms of sprouting, will wither away in dread, like the grass which perisheth. This courageous form, brave as a lion, which has never yet quailed before man or ghost, will be rent in twain like a mountain in a gale of wind; and an attack of influenza in your great toe will mercifully put an end to all your earthly agonies and troubles at once! Unhappy mortal, go! Thou hast heard thy doom."

A more wretched and weebegone face than Mr. Toospegs displayed, as he turned round, no earthly eye ever fell on before. Ray had turned to the window in convulsions of laughter.

"I ain't well," said Mr. Toospegs, mournfully, as he took up his hat. "I've got a pain somewhere, and I guess I'll go home. Good-morning, Mrs. Two-Shoes, I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure."

And slowly and dejectedly Mr. Toospegs crushed his hat over his eyes, and turned his steps in the direction of Dismal Hollow.

"Poor Horlander!" said Pet; "if he isn't scared out of his wits, if he ever had any. Say, Goody, won't you tell my fortune, too?"

"Come hither, scoffer," said the sibyl, with solemn sternness. "Appear, and learn the dark doom Destiny has in store for thee. Fate, that rules the fortunes of men as well as little yaller gals, will make you laugh on 'tother side of your mouth, one of these days."

"Oh, Hamlet! what a falling off was there!" quoted Ray, laughing. "What a short jump that was from the sublime! Don't pile on the agony too high, Mother Awful."

"Peace, irreverent mortal!" said Goody Two-Shoes, giving her snuff-box a solemn wave; "peace, while I foretell the future fate of this tawny little mortal before me!"

"Well, if you ain't the politest old lady!" ejaculated Pet. "But go on; I don't mind being called ugly, now. I'm getting used to it, and rather like it."

"You'll never be drowned," began the sibyl, looking down prophetically in Pet's little dark palm.

"Well, that's pleasant, anyway," said Pet. "Because you were born to be hanged," went on the old woman, unheeding the interruption.

"Whew!" whistled Pet. "Your days are numbered—"

"Well, I never saw a number on one of 'em yet," interrupted the incorrigible Petrolilla.

"Peace, scoffer!" exclaimed the beldame, fiercely. "The fates disclose a speedy change in thy destiny."

"I expect they do," said Pet; "for I'm going to be sent to school soon."

"Some dark torture is in store for you, an agony that nothing can alleviate, a nameless secret misery—"

"Perhaps it's the cholera," suggested Pet. "If it is, I ain't afraid; 'cause gin and water will cure it."

"Silence, girl! and mock not destiny thus. At some future day, you will be a wife."

"Well, there ain't anything very wonderful in that, I'm sure; I didn't need to be told that. You didn't expect I'd be an old maid—did you?" said Pet.

"I behold here," continued the seeress, peering into the little palm quite heedless of the interruption, "a miserable little but, where thirteen red-haired children are playing, and a tawny woman, with a dirty face, in the midst of them, is—"

"Spanking them all round!" interrupted Pet, eagerly. "If she isn't, it ain't me."

"Will you be silent?" vociferated the ancient prophetess, with increasing sharpness. "Terrible is the doom of those who scoff at fortune as thou dost! Don't withdraw your hand. It is here plainly revealed that if you travel much you'll see a good deal."

"Go 'way!" ejaculated Pet, incredulously. "And if you have a great deal of money you'll be rich."

"It ain't possible!" once more broke in the unbelieving Miss Lawless.

"And if you don't die, you'll live to be pretty old."

"Now, who'd 'a' thought it," said Pet. "Leave me, wretched unbeliever!" said the old woman, flinging away Pet's hand, with angry disdain. "Leave me; but beware! I am not to be mocked with impunity."

"Neither am I," said Pet; "so I'm not going to believe a word about them thirteen red-headed children. A baker's dozen, too; as if twelve wasn't enough! Foh! I ain't such a goose, Goody Two-Shoes."

"Well, wait, you misdirected, sunburned, unfortunate, turned-up-nosed misbeliever!" exclaimed the old sibyl, shaking her fist at Pet, in a rage. "Wait! And when my words come true, remember they were foretold by Goody Two-shoes."

"Well, I declare!" said Pet. "If I wasn't the patientest, best-tempered little girl in Maryland, I wouldn't put up with all this abuse. Not even my nose is allowed to escape; and it never injured you or anybody else in its life."

And Pet, with a deeply-wounded look, ran her finger along the insulted proboscis, as if to soothe its injured feelings.

"Will you tell my fortune, Mother Two-Shoes?" said Ray, turning round. "I am particularly anxious to know the future."

"Well, you needn't be, then," said Goody, snappishly; "for it has nothing good in store for a miserable scapegoat like you. I won't tell it; but I will tell that little gal," pointing to Erminie, who all the time had been quietly looking on, not knowing whether to laugh or be afraid, and wholly puzzled by it all. "She gave me some breakfast; and 'one good turn deserves another,' as the Bible says. Give me your hand."

But useless his mighty efforts; the bay slowly drew further and further ahead, until, after a half-hour's race, the scout reluctantly relinquished the attempt, and wheeling Comrade to the right-about, once more headed for the motte, ever and anon glancing behind him, and observing that the maiden still continued her rapid flight, until ere long the horse and rider appeared a mere speck upon the prairie.

Surprised at meeting such a strange creature in the motte, and wondering at her remarkable appearance and conduct, Prairie Rover searched every portion of the timber on foot for some clue to guide him in clearing up the mystery; but his length gave up his task as fruitless, and after looking to the comfort of Comrade, threw himself down to rest, ere the coming of the band of troopers.

When he awoke, darkness was upon the prairie, and a long line of horsemen were visible, coming toward the timber, whom the scout recognized as the military squadron.

Ten minutes more he had warmly greeted Captain Raymond and his men, and retiring into the deeper recesses of the timber, the whole party sought shelter within the ruined walls of the stockade, which concealed the light of the camp-fires.

With but little adventure, Ramsey Raymond and his men had reached the motte, capturing and killing several Indians who had crossed their path, and the young officer congratulated the scout upon the success of the expedition thus far.

Prairie Rover then made known his having sent Wild Wolf to the fort, with news of the departure of the Prairie Robin Hood and his red allies, and then he told him of his mysterious adventure with the lovely horsewoman in the motte; but Ramsey could give him no information regarding her, and they appealed to the men for information.

All seemed in the dark on the subject, except one old trapper, who declared to having himself seen the maiden, a year before, and his description of her proved to the scout that he was telling the truth.

"I've heard tell on the gal more than once, Prairie Rover, kase the Inguns has told me that they'd seen her, and they call her the Spirit of the Hills, 'cause you must know it's off yonder to the westward some forty miles or more, where I see'd her, and they say she lives in the hill country; but you kin jist bet your bottom dollar she's no human gal, she nor her horse neither."

"Not as bad as that, Dave, I think; but I would like to know more of her, and I'll solve the mystery yet," replied the scout, with determination.

It was then decided between Prairie Rover and Captain Raymond that they would encamp in the timber until dark the following night, and that this would give the men and horses a chance for perfect rest for the arduous and dangerous duties before them, and accordingly the scout and his men, and the camp was soon lost in deep repose.

The following day was spent by the men in clearing up their fire-arms, looking to their horses, mending their equipments, and cooking rations for a week, after which duties they ate a substantial dinner, and betook themselves to sleep away the remaining hours until the moment for starting.

With the disappearance of the sun behind the western hills, the clear notes of the bugle echoed through the motte, blowing "boots and saddles," and as twilight crept over the prairie, the daring band filed slowly forth from their retreat, and with Prairie Rover and Captain Ramsey at their head, took up the trail for the Indian villages.

CHAPTER IX.  
THE RAID OF DEATH.

OVER the dark prairie, at an easy canter, the daring band pressed on, until at midnight they reached the rising land, and under the guidance of the scout they penetrated into the forest, and after three hours' longer ride drew rein at the head of a small valley.

Now they are within two miles of the large Sioux village of Chota, and we will rest and refresh ourselves and horses until daybreak," said the scout, dismounting and setting the example.

"Captain Raymond, the village below us numbers some two thousand souls, of whom doubtless two hundred are men, able to fight us."

"Thus my plan is for me to lead the advance with about thirty men right into the village, while you follow after the lapse of ten minutes with thirty of your troopers."

"The remainder of the force can be divided into two parties, one under the trapper Dave to strike at once for the cattle corral to stampede all the ponies, and the other, under Lieutenant Hardcastle, to act as a reserve."

"When Dave has stampeded the cattle, he can then come up to our aid; and the lieutenant following him will cause a panic among the Indian camp, and cause them to believe our force much larger than it is."

"Also, let it be understood that we war only upon able-bodied men, and not upon women, children or cripples."

"I agree with you, scout; I detest this wholesale slaughter urged against red-skins, even though they are cruel savages."

"How long will you remain in the village, scout?"

"Not more than long enough to burn their wigwams, and spread complete consternation, and then we will dash on to Chota, seven miles further up the valley, situated near a fall of the river, which will drown the noise of our attack here, and enable us to surprise them also."

"From Chota we will take up position on the hills, and after a rest will ride through the lower valley where there is an encampment of Dog Soldier Sioux, and some Cheyennes, who have joined the expedition against the settlements."

"During the night we will encamp in the hills, and the following day sweep around upon the tribes who are encamped upon the border of the prairie and hill-land, after which, under the cover of the following night, we must beat a hasty retreat."

"A well-organized plan, scout, and one which our daring and energy must carry out."

"Now we will acquaint Hardcastle, Dave, and the men with the movements to be carried out, for already the eastern skies are getting gray."

A half-hour longer went by, and, divided into four parties, the command moved slowly down the valley, the detachment of the scout in advance, and consisting of the scouts, trappers, hunters, and a few friendly Indians of the Pawnee tribe.

Unsuspecting evil, the village was lost in deep repose, excepting where here and there a firelight glimmered, proving that some early hunter was up preparing his humble breakfast before starting on the hunt to provide food for his dusky family.

Silently and ominously the scout led his detachment on until the first wigwams were near at hand; and then, with a burst of prolonged and terrific war-cries, they dashed into the village, spreading terror and consternation around them.

Panic-stricken, the red protectors of the camp rushed forth from their homes, to be shot down instantly, while the cries of frightened squaws and papposes rent the air with heartrending wails.

Presently the torch was applied, and the flames began to make sad havoc with the village, while the shouts and shots of the party who had attacked the cattle corral were heard mingling with the war-whoops of the Indians and battle-cries of the scout and his men.

In every direction then scattered hundreds of frightened mustangs, flying through the village and adding new terror to the Indians, while dashing up with his force, Captain Raymond joined in the carnival of battle.

Upon all sides the red warriors fell in defense of their homes, many of them defenseless, for in their confusion they could find no arms, and believing the enemy ten times their real number, they fled in affright to the hillsides and forests, leaving their village in the possession of the pale-faces.

"Now for one grand sweep of destruction, and then, ere daylight is fairly upon us, we will away for Cheo," cried the scout, who seemed to the men to be the very personification of reckless courage, while, after seeing him in battle, the reputation he had won did not surprise them.

Dashing through the village, the scout called a halt, and discovered that, though the enemy had lost scores of warriors killed, only half a dozen of his men were missing, and with a cheer at their success away the band dashed up the valley to carry the war into the village of Cheo.

As Prairie Rover had said, the noise of a small waterfall drowned the sound of the attack upon Chota, and ere the surprised Indians were aware of the existence of a pale-face within a hundred miles, the wild, ringing war-whoop of the scout sent a thrill of horror and terror through many a red skin's heart.

"Give them no time to arm or rally, men! at them with a savage will!" cried Prairie Rover, and a burst of war-cries answered his words, and death held high carnival once more in the home of the red-man.

In the twinkling of an eye almost the village was in ruins, the ground strewn with dead warriors, and hundreds of squaws and papposes flying for safety to the hills.

We have no time to tarry now, as the Dog Soldiers and Cheyennes will be warned and be ready to meet us, so let us press our horses hard, and at once ride down the lower valley."

All right, scout; you lead, and we will follow. We lost five good men in Cheo, now to avenge them and their comrades who fell at Chota," replied Captain Ramsey Raymond, and with a loud cheer the destroying human whirlwind swept on, the horses dripping with foam and covered with dust, but urged on for life and death.

Notwithstanding an alarm given by some of the fugitives from Cheo, the Dog Soldier Sioux were not prepared to meet their foes, but took safety in flight, leaving their village to fall into the hands of the whites.

A few brave warriors, however, determined to sell their lives dearly, and the death of several troopers was the result; but in compact mass the band rushed on, and the Indian camp was a scene of desolation and death.

A village of savage Cheyennes then fell beneath the anger of the pale-faces, the braves, driven to despair, fighting bravely for their homes, and dropping a number of white horsemen from their saddles.

But the march of the attacking band was irresistible, and their track was one of ruin and bloodshed.

Having captured the village, the scout ordered a retreat to the hills near by, carrying with them large quantities of Indian plunder, loaded upon horses taken from the corral.

Once in the hills, the party halted to rest, and those horses that were broken down were exchanged for the best mustangs captured from the Indians.

Night coming on, strong detachments of guards were stationed against surprise, for that the Indians would attack them, the scout felt assured, if they could rally their different warriors in time.

But, excepting a few stray shots, fired by some prowling brave, the night passed quietly away, and with the first glimmer of light the band moved off to continue its work of ruin against the prairie border villages of the red-skins.

Then the foresight of the scout, in ordering the shooting of all the mustangs that were not stamped, was seen, for although the Indians had assembled in large numbers to attack the whites, very few of them were mounted, and could not follow upon their trail with sufficient speed to keep them in sight.

By noon the prairie was reached, and the bands of hunting Indians were attacked with irresistible force, before there was a chance of resistance, for they had never looked for danger from pale-faces in that direction, and being some thirty miles distant from the villages of Chota and Cheo, they had not known of the ruin that had fallen upon them.

Another long day of carnage, and satiated with their bloody work, the band of whites struck forth over the prairie, and with weary steps headed for the motte, wherein was situated the ruined outpost.

As the last lingering rays of the setting sun fell from the summit of the distant hills, the scout glanced behind him, and what he discovered proved that the greatest danger of the daring raid of death was yet to be met and overcome.

CHAPTER X.  
THE FORLORN HOPE.

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Indian warriors, some mounted, but mostly on foot, and directing their course upon the trail of the pale-faces.

Fully outnumbering the band, five to one, and with his animals so jaded that they could hardly be urged faster than a walk, the scout felt that they were compelled to halt for a night's rest in the motte, and that by morning the Indians would have come up and surrounded them, and their only way of escape would be to cut bravely through their lines.

"We are in a hot place, Captain Raymond," laughed the scout, as he pointed toward the hills.

"Yes, but it is no worse than I expected; in fact we have escaped well, with the loss of only twenty-five poor fellows; but it is owing to your dash and courage, scout, for we were upon the villages before they could resist."

"To seek would you advise?"

"But what would you advise?"

"To seek the ruined stockade, and prepare ourselves for a fight, for the Indians may attack us to-night."

"If not, we will have had a good night's rest, and thus refreshed, the horses will carry us bravely through their lines, and there are too few of them mounted to cause us much trouble when once we get clear of the motte."

"Yet, infuriated as they are, they may storm us to-night, so we must hasten on and set our house in order for the coming of our guests."

The scout spoke lightly of the danger, but all felt that it was very great, and urging forward their tired steeds the motte was soon reached, and ere darkness came on, the band was strongly fortified in the old stockade.

Contrary to their expectations the night passed quietly away, and the sun arose to discover no Indian visible.

But creeping from the stockade, the scout bent his way toward the edge of the motte, and after an absence of a half hour returned, his face showing no sign of discovery to their disadvantage.

"Well, Prairie Rover, what have you seen?" cried Captain Raymond, advancing toward him.

"That we have succeeded most thoroughly in this expedition, captain."

"I know it, and we'll all be lions when we get back."

"If we get back; but I must not delay telling you."

First, my messenger has informed the Indians who went against the settlements, that their own homes have been visited by the torch and sword, and out upon the prairies, some three miles, is the entire force of Sioux and their allies, who returning in haste were met by the party pursuing us."

"Slowly they are arranging their plans which are to surround us in our stronghold, and for us to attempt to cut through their lines would be certain death."

"What is to be done then, scout?" coolly asked the young captain.

"I see but one plan, and that is to stand a siege."

"We have only a week's provisions, and with no chance of success."

"Horse-flesh is most palatable when one has nothing else, captain."

"But you must stand a siege; the stockade is strong, you have tried men and true, and plenty of ammunition to beat back the entire force of red-skins if they were to storm you."

"In four days, or less, I can return with reinforcements from the fort."

"You—how will you leave the motte?"

"I'll dash through their lines, which are not formed fully yet, and Comrade can carry me away from their fleetest horses."

"True, he showed no sign of fatigue yesterday, when all of the other horses were fagged out; but there are swift horses in Robin Hood's band."

"Robin Hood and his men are not with the Indians; they have gone off upon some other devilment."

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By Heaven! that horse fairly flies!  
See! see! he will make it—he will! he will!  
Such were the cries from the men in the  
mote, as they narrowly watched the progress  
of the scout, and then a wild yell of joy burst  
from the timber as they saw Prairie Rover  
rush in between the two columns, his rifle flash-  
ing right and left upon his enemies, still two  
hundred yards distant.

Warrior after warrior fell as the leaden hail  
was poured into the crowded ranks, but on they  
pressed, pouring in a shower of arrows and  
rifle-bullets as they came.

As though bearing a charmed life, the scout  
and his noble steed remained unhurt, dashing  
across the line, and with a yell from Prairie  
Rover that was heard at the motive, the flying  
steed bounded away on the open prairie, fol-  
lowed by a hundred Indian horsemen.

But Comrade was no ordinary steed, and his  
swift flight soon distanced the smaller mus-  
tangs of the warriors, and in an hour had left  
them far behind, as, unhurt, horse and rider  
sped on, having successfully escaped in the  
forn hope, and with every chance of soon  
bringing aid from the fort to rescue Captain  
Raymond and his gallant band.

#### CHAPTER XI. THE PRAIRIE ROBIN HOOD.

UPON the evening of the arrival of the In-  
dian forces in front of the settlement, and when  
the white renegade chief was planning his at-  
tack against his own race, there suddenly darted  
into the outlaw camp an Indian messenger,  
his horse showing signs of hard riding, and  
even his red-skin rider exhibiting in his stern  
face a look of fatigue.

It was near the sunset hour, and the white  
chief and his red allies were holding a council  
of war beneath a huge tree where Robin Hood  
had halted and made his headquarters.

The steed, a large sorrel stallion, with a  
build denoting extraordinary speed and bot-  
tom, was grazing near by, loose, while his  
bride, accoutrements, and a silver-mounted  
Mexican saddle, with its broad horn, lay at  
the base of the tree.

Leaning against the trunk of the tree, his  
arms folded upon his broad breast, and his  
whole attitude one of perfect ease and grace,  
was the man who had won the name of the  
Prairie Robin Hood.

Six feet in height, he was of a magnificent  
physique, and beneath the closely-fitting pants  
of dressed buck-skin, and blue flannel shirt, his  
form gave indication of great strength, agility,  
and powers of endurance.

Cavalry boots incased his feet, the tops  
reaching to his knees, and the heels armed with  
silver spurs, while upon his head he wore a  
soft, gray-felt hat, lopped up upon the left side  
with a gold arrow, and with a black plume  
drooping over the brim.

A broad belt encircled his small waist, and  
upon either hip was a handsomely-mounted  
revolver, while in front, and ready for the  
clutch of either hand, were a bow-knife and  
double-barreled pistol of exceedingly large  
bore and fine sight.

Hanging to the belt, upon the left side, and  
attached by a red-skin cord, was a small,  
gleaming battle-axe, with a long handle, and a  
weapon which the chief had been known to use  
with terrible effect in battle.

Having described the general appearance of  
the noted Robin Hood, his face certainly de-  
serves mention, for it was one that once seen  
could not be forgotten.

The eyes were as changeable in expression  
as an April day, being at times cruelly bitter,  
again savage in their fierceness, and then  
touchingly sorrowful; but at all times they  
were searching and restless in their look.

The forehead was high, bold, intellectual,  
and the dark, iron-gray hair, combed directly  
back, fell to his shoulders in wavy masses,  
while his beard, reaching to his belt almost,  
was also tinged with silver threads, though the  
face appeared to be that of a man under  
forty.

The month was forbiddingly stern, sneering  
and cruel, and the whole expression that of a  
man who feared neither God nor human being,  
and felt that he was an outcast upon the face  
of the earth.

Years before the man had drifted upon the  
frontier, coming from the far south-west, it  
was said, and with a reckless band of a dozen  
followers at his heels, men like himself, devot-  
ing their lives to crime.

At first the chief devoted himself to the life  
of a highwayman, living in some secret recess  
of the forest, and demanding toll from all  
passers through his domains.

Ever polite to his victims, and most courte-  
ous to women, whom he never robbed, and he  
never taking from a man his every cent, he  
soon won the name of the Prairie Robin Hood.

But at last the military were on his path,  
and the country became aroused at some more dar-  
ing deed, and he was hunted down, and after a  
terrible struggle, made prisoner by Colonel  
Vernon, but not until he had shot three sol-  
diers dead, and was himself severely wounded.

He was tried at once by military court, and  
sentenced to be hung, as soon as he recovered  
from his wounds; but the night previous to  
the day appointed for his execution he escaped  
from his log prison, and the next morning the  
sentinel who guarded him was found dead be-  
fore the door, but without one mark of vio-  
lence upon him, while upon his face remained  
a look of mortal terror, as though some un-  
earthly visitant had appeared before him.

A year passed away after the escape of the  
Robin Hood of the Prairies, and then he sud-  
denly reappeared on the border, at the head of  
a formidable band of renegades, and from that  
day his cruelty toward his fellow man seemed  
to know no bounds, for the armed and the  
defenseless everywhere fell beneath his deadly  
hated.

Such was the Prairie Robin Hood, and one  
gazing into his face as he leaned with folded  
arms against the tree, listening to the war-talks  
of the Indian chiefs, Brave Shield, Big Whis-  
tler, and Tall Bull, could not but feel that his  
dark and handsome face hid behind its cruel  
mask some deep and damning mystery of  
crime and lost honor.

"The chiefs talk like women, and would  
palaver for hours like a gang of old women at  
a tea-drinking."

"Let them hold on to their rattling tongues,  
lest the birds of the woods understand them,  
and carry the tidings of our coming to the  
settlers," and Robin Hood spoke in a stern and  
sneering voice.

"What would our white brother have?"  
sulkily returned Brave Shield.

"I would have you get your red outthroats  
ready to march upon the settlement with the  
coming of dark; let the whole band follow in  
my lead, and I will radden the prairies with  
the blood of the pale-faces," savagely returned  
the white chief.

"The great chief speaks well, and his red  
brothers shall fringe their belts with pale-face  
scalps, and fill their wigwams, with pale-face  
squaws," said Tall Bull, his eyes glowing in  
anticipation of his evil designs.

"You lay your accursed and bloody claws  
upon the head or form of a white woman, and  
I'll tear with my own hand your scalp from  
your skull," cried the white chief, his eyes  
flashing fire.

Instantly the Indian warriors were upon  
their feet, their hands upon their weapons,  
but, undismayed, Robin Hood stood before  
them, an evil glitter in his eyes.

"What! has our white brother turned trait-  
or?" asked Big Whistler, after a pause.

"I will never be a traitor to a woman, even  
though I practice hellish barbarities upon men.  
No, you red devils, I lead you against the  
settlement to kill and make captive the men,  
and to carry off what plunder you can; but, so  
help me the Great Spirit, if one woman, or  
child, dies by the hand of a red-skin inten-  
tionally, I'll turn my renegade bloodhounds  
upon you, and aid the white warriors in driv-  
ing you to your haunts."

The Prairie Robin Hood spoke in a tone that  
proved he was in deadly earnest, and evil  
looks were going the rounds of the Indians'  
faces, and a storm was threatening, when sud-  
denly a horseman dashed swiftly into the  
midst of the party.

"Hal, what brings the Comanche Wild  
Wolf here now, when he skulked to the prai-  
rie when we took the war-path?" tauntingly  
said the white chief.

"The Wild Wolf is no skulking dog; he has  
been on the war-path of the pale-face war-  
riors, and has come to tell his red brothers  
that the brave from the fort are now laying  
in ashes their happy villages in the hills."

A yell of terror, of rage and despair, went  
up from the assembled chiefs at this news; but  
the stern voice of Robin Hood checked their  
cries.

"Who is it, my red brothers, that brings  
this news?"

"A stranger chief, a Comanche dog, a friend  
of the pale-faces."

"The Comanche lies,"

With a yell of fury the Wild Wolf threw  
himself from the back of his steed and rushed  
upon the white chief, his knife glittering in  
his hand.

But a dozen strong arms seized and held him  
back, and powerless, he cried:

"Red brothers, the tongue of the Wild Wolf  
is not crooked; he speaks straight; the pale-  
faces are now in their happy homes."

"If my red brothers doubt the Wild Wolf,  
let them bear him back a prisoner, and then  
burn him at the stake."

The words and manner of the Comanche  
carried conviction with them, and again al-  
most inhuman yells filled the air, while in hot  
haste the Indians began to mount, no longer  
thinking of attacking the settlements while  
their own homes and families were in danger.

In vain Robin Hood pleaded with them to  
continue on and devastate the settlement; his  
words were unheeded, and in a short while the  
whole band of warriors departed, leaving the  
angry and disappointed Robin Hood alone  
with his squadron of renegades.

But, undaunted by the desertion of his allies,  
the daring chief determined to himself strike a  
blow against the settlement, and with what  
plunder he could secure dark back to his  
stronghold in the hills, distant nearly three  
days' journey from the fort.

With this determination, he called his men  
around him, made known his intended plans,  
and at nightfall the band was upon the move,  
slowly approaching the happy homes of the  
hardy pioneers of the frontier.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 293.)

## Idaho Tom,

THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND!

BY OLL COOMES.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

IDAHO TOM AND THE MAD TRAPPER ON THE  
MOVE.

By a dim fire that burned on the hearth of  
the Mad Trapper's cabin, sat the old border-  
man himself and Idaho Tom.

Without it was night, black and gloomy.  
The door of the cabin was closed and barred.  
The little window also had been fastened up,  
and every available point strengthened and  
guarded with extreme care, as though danger  
was apprehended.

"Yes, yes," the trapper was saying, when  
we intrude upon the privacy of their conver-  
sation, "the days of peace are all over with  
hereabouts, Thomas. Old Molock has been  
stirred up, and he in turn has stirred up the  
red-skins."

"And one might as well stir up a hornet's  
nest," added Idaho Tom.

"Yes, the condemned vagrants are mean  
and devilish; and they're swarming over from  
the foot-hills like musketeers. Shouldn't wonder  
if we'd be driven out o' here in less than a  
week."

"But I can't see, for the life of me, why—" began Tom, but his words were here cut short  
by a clicking sound starting suddenly up in  
the big pine chest in the corner to the left of  
the fire-place.

The old trapper started to his feet, and  
glancing toward Tom, at the same time assum-  
ing an attitude of intense listening, raised his  
finger as if to enjoin silence upon the lips of his  
companion.

The clicking in the corner lasted for only a  
moment or two.

"Well, if I must, I must; for I won't ask  
you to go out," the trapper said to his com-  
panion, as he turned and advanced toward the  
chest. Reaching it, he inserted a key, turned  
it, and then lifted the lid, revealing to the as-  
tonished gaze of the youth a telegraphic bat-  
tery.

"I thought so from the first night I said  
here, friend Dee," the youth said, pointing to  
the instrument.

"I loved you'd hear the thing click; but  
then it's no use keepin' a secret from a friend,"  
replied the trapper, with an air of philosophi-  
cal gravity.

"That, Tom, is an undressed,  
glit'ning, lightnin'-geared telegraph machine;  
and I'm the chief that fingers this end of the  
communicatin' thingumbob. Zoe Leland I ar-  
ranged to play on it. It's connected with the  
floatin' island on the bay, over a mile distant.  
I was called jist now, and I'm goin' to answer.  
Here," and he adjusted the connecting wire,  
and thumbed off the word in a twinkling.

The next instant the battery began a rapid  
clicking. Dee stood with his head partly  
turned, listening closely to catch every word;  
and Tom noticed, as the sound continued, that  
the trapper's face assumed a painful expres-  
sion.

At length the sound ceased. Zedekiah drew  
a long, heavy breath, and glancing toward  
Tom, exclaimed:

"My God, Tom!"

"What is it, Zed?"

"Zoe Leland is a captive!"

Tom groaned in spirit.

"Who captured her, Zed?" he asked.

"Wait a minute, and I'll find out."

Zed asked the question over the wire.

"An Indian, they say," Dee replied, after  
receiving an answer. "They don't know how  
he ever got to the island, but long before night  
he got there somehow or other, and carried  
her off in one of their own canoes. Strikes me  
as being a queer thing, Tom."

"Why haven't we known this sooner?"

"Because we haven't been here, nor down  
to the bay. Leland says he's been tryin' to  
git me here for four long hours, and you see  
we've only been here a little while. That ex-  
plains the hull thing."

"Well, what's to be done?"

"We're wanted at the island, right away.  
It is being besieged by a hundred red-skins  
that seem bent on its kapter. Leland says  
we'll have to approach with great caution."

"Is any one in pursuit of Zoe's captors, did  
he say?"

"I'll ask," said the trapper-operator, finger-  
ing the instrument rapidly.

The answer was soon flashed back.

"Frank Casleton and a friend are in pursuit.  
The rest of the Boy Hunters are here on the  
island, fighting nobly for us."

A look of disappointment clouded Tom's  
face, and, in a bitter tone, he replied:

"I dare say that curse of this land, Mat  
Molock, the Wolf-Herder, has got her in his  
den ere this. And if so, what can two boys  
do toward rescuing her? My opinion is that Zoe  
Leland is lost."

"It may be, Thomas, but let us hope for the  
best till we are positive. But, Tom, will you  
go to the island with me now?"

"I hardly know what to do—whether to  
strike out for Molock's quarters, and lend my  
aid to rescue Zoe, or go down to the bay."

"Tom," said Dee seriously, "I verily be-  
lieve that you are in love with Zoe Leland."

Tom blushed, but finally stammered out:

"I am not ashamed of the truth, friend Dee.  
I do love Zoe Leland with all my heart, and  
have from the hour I first saw her. My love  
told me that the boy Albert, who came here  
that memorable night, was Zoe in disguise,  
notwithstanding your efforts to deceive me in  
the matter."

The old trapper smiled, sadly, and replied:

"I believe you could see through a mill-  
stone, Tom, if you recognized Zoe in her dis-  
guise that night. But then, I also believe  
you loved that girl. She's a cherubim, Tom,  
if that were ever one on earth. She's good  
enough, purty enough and sweet enough for  
an angel to marry, I do solemnly believe."

"That's what I'm afraid of—that she is too  
good for a young vagabond like me."

"Heavens, listen!" It was the old trapper  
that uttered the exclamation.

The sudden boom of a cannon rolled up from  
the lake and burst forth anew in a hundred  
mountain echoes.

"They're having it hot and heavy down  
there," said Tom, with a nervous start.

"Let's git ready and go down," replied Dee;  
"that say you, Thomas?"

"I am ready for anything, Zed," answered  
Tom.

The two secured their weapons and plunged  
out into the night.

The sky was overcast, and a dense fog hung  
over the valley and hills.

Down the gloomy pass the two men turned  
their faces, and moved with hasty footsteps.

They hurried on in silence for some distance,  
when Idaho Tom finally said:

"Zedekiah, I must admit that the past  
month has been the most eventful one of my  
life."

"Why so, Tom?" asked the borderman.

"Because I have been completely puzzled  
and mystified all the time."

"Well, what about?"

"Things around Tahoe; the secret connect-  
ed with the floating island and other things,  
down to your connection with the whole."

"Don't let that, this, or anything bother  
your brain now, Tom," replied Dee. "I'll  
explain everything one of these days. I know  
things you speak of look queer to a stranger,  
but then, it is the object of those interested in  
the matter that they should wear an air of  
mystery so as to keep the red-skins away.  
But, dang 'em, they don't 'pear to skeer with  
a Continental. Rest assured, Tom, that that is  
nothing wrong about any of this apparent mys-  
tery that puzzles you."

"But, Dee, those two men that we buried  
the other day were friends of yours, were they  
not?"

"Wal, ya-as, they war, Tom," the trapper  
replied, with some hesitation.

"Dar'n't make a break here," Zedekiah  
whispered.

Keeping within the shadows, they stole  
around to the south-west side of the bay, and  
again paused and listened. All was silent here.  
The Indians appeared to have concentrated  
their force all on the north-east side of the bay.  
At least, this was the surmise of Zed and Tom,  
founded upon the extreme silence that prevail-  
ed along this part of the shore; to their sur-  
prise, however, they were suddenly startled  
by a low moan.

Tom uttered a low exclamation of surprise,  
while the Mad Trapper chuckled as if with  
suppressed laughter.

Looking through the parted foliage before  
them, both saw a red-skin seated in a canoe,  
writhing and shuddering in all the agonies of  
death.

"Ah! friend trapper!" exclaimed Tom, in  
a dry, husky tone, "it is a savage fast in that  
infernal machine, one of the mysteries of Ta-  
hoe!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.  
A COLLISION ON THE LAKE.

AGAIN the old trapper chuckled with delight  
over Tom's excitement.

"Boy," he said, "be you afraid of that ca-  
noe?"

"I am not superstitious, but I can't ac-  
count for the mysterious power with which  
that craft seems endowed," replied the youth.

"Wal, if we go to the island we'll have to  
go in that very skiff, Tom."

"Never! I've been there, Zed."

The trapper's tall form shook with suppres-  
sed laughter.

"I'll work it, Tom," he finally replied. "I  
think I know what ails the durned thing."

"Well, I darsay you do," declared the  
boy.

"Come along then, my lad."

Out on to the open beach gilded the border-  
man, and close behind him followed Idaho  
Tom.

The moon was again hidden behind a cloud  
and darkness hung over the face of all.

The two moved down to the water's edge,  
and found that the enchanted skiff was out  
some ten or fifteen feet from shore. The sa-  
vage seemed conscious of their approach, and  
endeavored to liberate himself from his ago-  
nizing position, but all in vain.

The Mad Trapper waded into the water and  
hailed the canoe ashore. Then he stepped  
into it, and catching the savage by the girdle  
jerked him up out of the seat.

The act liberated him from his helpless position, and with an ap-  
parent cry of delight the savage sprung from  
the skiff and bounded away into the woods.

The Mad Trapper roared with laughter.

"I'd laugh, too, if I could see the point,"  
said Tom, in perplexity.

"Wal, I reckon it is a sockdolager to them  
as don't understand science; but the nub of  
the hull thing is right here, Thomas. Under this  
seat is a galvanic battery of great power, the  
poles, which are slender wires, attached to  
each of these oars right where the hands grasp  
them. Here, you can feel 'em."

Tom stepped into the craft, and upon exam-  
ination found that there was a wire running  
from the extremities of the box, which com-  
posed the oarsman's seat, up to the row-locks,  
thence along the under side of the oar to the  
end where the hand was fastened upon it.

"Now then," continued the trapper, "you  
might grab one of these oars and hold it till  
doomsday and it wouldn't affect you; and you  
might grasp it with both hands and it wouldn't  
harm ye if ye stood up, but if ye'd set down  
on that box-lid, then you'd catch goos; for the  
box is so constructed that as soon as one sets  
down on it an electric current is turned on,  
and the heavier the man, the stronger the cur-  
rent. And once a hold of the plagued thing it's  
p'rtly hard to let up without hurt, or less  
ye know how to work it. But an lugin will  
pull away at the oars, and that makes it all  
the worse on him. That's all that is 'bout it,  
Tom. But if you want it 'lustrated take this  
seat."

"No, thanks, my gay old philosopher. As  
I said before, I have had a taste of your infer-  
nal nerve-tiring machine, and I don't care  
about trying it again. I have heard of gal-  
vanic batteries, but never have seen one, nor  
had any idea of their mysterious power, else I  
might have mistrusted the truth of the mat-  
ter. But of all the ideas, this one gets me."

"What in wonder can be the object in it, any-  
how?"

Dee raised the box-lid and threw the ap-  
paratus out of gear, then seating himself upon  
the box, seized the oars and drove the skiff  
rapidly out into the bay. When some rods  
from the shore he said:

"You asked me what object that is in this  
outfit; it is to keep Ingins and boys from  
botherin' the skiff when one comes ashore and  
leaves it to look around awhile."

"Well, it's a capital contrivance, I must  
frankly admit, Zed; and—"

His words were here cut short by a cannon-  
ball that came screaming through the air so  
close to their heads that both Tom and Zed  
dozed like ducks.

"By the ghost of Caesar! that war a close  
shave, friend trapper," exclaimed the youth.

"I guess they think we're enemies," said  
Dee; "but for the life of me, I can't see how  
they tell in this confounded fog who's on the  
lake at all, and who arn't."

"Maybe they were just firing to skeer the  
red-skins away, for it is impossible to see any-  
thing creeping through this fog—heavens!"

Crash went the prow of their swift-moving  
skiff into the side of a canoe whose presence  
there was unknown, so deep and dense were  
the mist and gloom.

A cry of terror went up from the lips of the  
unknown party; the shrill, sharp voice of a  
woman was heard.

The next moment the unfortunate voyagers  
were foundering and struggling in the waves.

"Och! Mother av Moses!" cried one of  
the crew, in a loud, excited voice, "the red devils  
will kill us now!"

"Help me, Billy, for God's sake, with Zoe;  
she is drowning!"

The voice of the speakers sounded familiar,  
and their words told Tom and Zed of the pre-  
dicament they were in.

"It's some of our friends, Zed!" exclaimed  
Tom, peering into the gloom before them.

"Who be you there?" asked the trapper, in  
a subdued tone, but the confusion made by  
the swashing water drowned his voice.

He spoke louder.

"Oh, Blessed Virgin! and it's our Torpe-  
do," was the joyful reply of Billy Brady.

"Hilp, mon, we're drownin'! Yees busted our  
old tub, and b' the powers we've got the swate  
young angel!"

Before the last word had died up on the  
youth's lips, Zedekiah ran the skiff alongside  
the struggling trio, and with the assistance of  
Tom, Zoe was lifted up into the craft. But  
she was already unconscious.

Billy and Frank were next taken aboard,  
and the happy youths could scarcely restrain  
a shout of joy and triumph.

"This is a bad state of affairs," Frank said,  
"not that it hurts Billy and I, but on Zoe's  
account. Had you been enemies instead of  
friends we would all have perished."

"Very likely you would," replied Tom,  
"but, old friend, I am glad to meet you, and  
know that you have rescued Miss Leland."

The old trapper gave up the oars to Idaho  
Tom, while he took the wet, dripping form of  
the maiden in his arms, and endeavored to re-  
store her to consciousness.

A deep silence now fell upon the party, so  
eager were all for the restoration of the fair  
girl. Only the dip of the oars, the heavy  
breathing of the oarsman, and the swash of  
the water broke the unnatural silence. Deep  
and depressing hung the gray fog over the  
bay.

Not until all had been assured of Zoe's re-  
covery by words from her own lips, was that  
death-like pall lifted from the hearts of the  
little crew, nor did one venture to speak above  
a whisper. When this assurance, however,  
was guaranteed them, Idaho Tom exclaimed:

"Boys, I declare I don't know where I am  
going!"

"Stop, then," said Zedekiah Dee, "and let's  
git our bearings afore we run into the clutches  
of some of the red purgatorians."

"Yes, be certain by all means," said Frank,  
"for there are several canoes with savages  
creeping around over the bay in search of us.  
In order to elude them we were compelled to  
bend our course several times, consequently  
we got lost in the fog, and were going at right  
angles with your course when you ran into  
us."

"Lost, by Jee-rusalem!" exclaimed Dee,  
unable to get his course, "if I war on lan I  
you couldn't fool me as to the points of the  
compass. But I'm no sailor."

"Billy, you're a sailor-boy; give us the  
north point of the compass," said Frank.

"The north pint av me hat!" retorted Bil-  
ly. "All



## SWUNG OFF.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

The rosy Nan, that winsome thing,  
Lilt hearted as a feather,  
And I sat in that woodland swing  
So cheerily together.

The green leaves rustled glad and gay;  
Flowers at our feet were springing;  
Her head upon my shoulder lay—  
And it was blessed swinging!

As to and fro we idly went,  
With souls so light and lifting,  
It seemed that if the rope was rent  
In air, we'd still go drifting.

She sweetly clung unto my arm;  
I vowed I'd save her from all harm,  
And kissed her, gently swinging.

And as we higher swung at last  
It looked somewhat appalling,  
I kept one arm about her waist  
To hold the maid from falling.

I said, "It seems we're on the flight  
Away from worldly weather,  
As if toward some star of light  
We're journeying together."

"And let me say here on this rope,  
Whose strands should all be silken,  
And reaching far and farther up  
To heaven beyond the welkin—"

"Let me say what I never spoke:  
Oh, Nan, I love you gladly!  
And—" here with eager rings,  
And down we tumbled madly.

Ah, luckless fall! To earth it dashed  
Ourselves and all my fancies;  
No bones broke, but my heart it smashed,  
And utterly ruined Nan's—"

Because she said, in great disdain—  
Her tones with anger ringing,  
"I'll never speak to you again,  
And never go a-swinging."

## A Ruse de Guerre.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"You'd better make up your mind to do it, Frank. I give you my word for it, you'll find 'Laurelton' not a bad place, and the girls are—well, there are no finer girls than my granddaughters."

Old Judge Ransom looked earnestly over his gold-rimmed glasses at Frank Hazelton's handsome, indifferent face.

"You certainly are very good, Judge, to press upon me such a friendly invitation to visit 'Laurelton,' and under any other circumstances than those we have discussed, I would be delighted to accept. As it is—I confess I haven't the cheek to go down to your place, see my pretty second cousins, be entertained by aunt Sara, and all the while feel that my object, and your object, is to select me a wife from among the young ladies."

"That's the shortest nonsense, boy. Why on earth shouldn't you marry one of your cousins, and thereby secure 'Laurelton' in the family? Somebody'll get the fine old place with one of my girls—why shouldn't it as well be you?"

"I suppose you call yours a very sensible view of the case, Judge Ransom. But, how can a fellow expect to curb and harness his fancy and affection to suit—even with 'Laurelton' thrown in the bargain?"

"Who's talking of fancies and affection? I only asked you to run down to the homestead for the holidays and get acquainted with the girls; then, if you fall in love with one of them, well and good. There's not much danger but that they'll take to you, Frank. You're a fine fellow, and your five years' absence at the German universities add very greatly to your popularity."

"Thank you, Judge. Surely I ought to be grateful, and oblige you by falling in love with one of my charming cousins."

"Then we'll consider it settled, shall we? The Thursday before Christmas."

"I guess we'll manage it between us, Sara. Frank's agreed to come, and, what's more, has half-promised to fall in love with one of the girls."

Judge Ransom sat reading his village paper beside the cheery open grate; and fat, motherly Mrs. Ransom sat in her capacious chair, busily darning socks.

"Promised to fall in love with one of the girls! Henry, the idea! Who ever heard of such a thing? You never went and told him you wanted him to marry one of them?"

"Of course I did. There's nothing like being open and above-board. I like young Hazel, and told him so; and told him he was welcome to one of my granddaughters, and 'Laurelton' in the bargain."

"Well, Henry Ransom, I never would have believed you were such a fool! Don't you know you've ruined our little arrangement by going and telling him? Why, there's not a man living who'll take a fancy to a girl that is recommended to him! Well, if you aren't a ninny!"

"I can't see what I've done so dreadful. I'm sure you are as anxious to have him in the family as I am."

"Of course I am—and that is why I hate to see anything spoiled so. My word for it, Frank Hazelton is too noble a nature to deliberately make love to a girl because she is rich; and, at the same time, I know he will take a dislike to 'em simply because he knows he is expected to do the other thing."

"Seems to me I have put my foot in it, Sara, according to your way of thinking. I am sure I meant well enough."

"Oh, I know that. Now, if you'll just leave it to me, and agree to do just what I say, I think it'll end all right, yet. Listen, now, and see if a woman can't beat even a judge in love affairs."

And he sat and listened, his fine face gradually broadening until it was one big smile from eyebrows to chin.

"If you don't deserve a diploma," he declared, jubilantly.

A magnificent December night, with myriads of frostily-twinkling stars above, and a snow-bound landscape below them; and Frank Hazelton, wrapped in his Astrachan overcoat, and his seal-skin cap cozily jammed over his forehead, thought, as he was driven from the depot to "Laurelton" behind the judge's fast trotters, and in the "Laurelton's" big double-seated, warmly-cushioned sleigh, that the lines might fall to a fellow in a far less pleasant place than that to which he was going; where the judge met him at the door, in the broad banner of warm yellow light streaming from within.

"Come right in, my boy—right in! You're as welcome as the first flowers in spring. Here's aunt Sara waiting to kiss you—aren't you, eh?"

Frank found himself in warm, motherly arms, and, laughing and joking, was escorted to the parlor, where four young girls were sitting in apparent ready welcome.

"What! have I four cousins! Judge, you've got the best of me. I had no idea my courage was to be put to such a test."

"Indeed, you needn't think you are so bless-

ed as to possess four pretty cousins. These are all you need lay claim to—Maud and Ida, my two dear granddaughters. These other two young ladies are Miss Florence and Irma Cloudesley—visiting 'Laurelton,' to assist in entertaining you."

After such an informal introduction, the ice was immediately broken; and, before the merry little circle broke up that night, Frank caught himself internally offering congratulations to himself that he had come to "Laurelton."

"Pretty girls—of course they're pretty, all of them," he soliloquized, mentally, as he carefully arranged his necktie, one bright, merry morning, a month after he had come to the farm house.

"There's Maud, with her matchless grace and her stately, dignified manner. She should wear a coronet and never feel but what the strawberry leaves were honored by her acceptance. But not for a thousand 'Laureltons' would I spend a lifetime with her; when an hour exhausts all her entertaining and instructive ability."

"I wonder what aunt Sara and the judge would think if they knew of my private opinion of Maud and Ida! To be sure Ida's a nice, ladylike little thing, and has about as much mind of her own as a butterfly. I doubt if she ever really does think beyond the arrangement of her pretty yellow hair, and the fit of those marvelously tiny slippers of hers."

From which it will be seen Mr. Frank Hazelton had been very observant.

"There's the Misses Cloudesley—sensible, intelligent girls as I ever saw; only Florence will persist in tyrannizing over dear little Irma—"

Then the dinner-bell abruptly dispelled his mental criticisms, and he went down, to find them all gone in but Irma Cloudesley, who, with a suspiciously fearful face, stood before the mirror. She started, half-guiltily, as he entered.

"Oh, I thought you had gone in. You're late, Mr. Hazelton."

"And so are you. What has kept you?"

"He saw the flush surge over her cheeks."

"I—oh—nothing—much."

"Has Flo been teasing you again?"

He went close up to her, looking down into her face.

"No—nothing at all. Please go in to dinner, Mr. Hazelton."

She looked really distressed, he saw; but the headstrong fellow did not obey at all.

"I'll go, in a moment, Irma. Tell me first if you are angry with me that you seem so eager to get rid of me! Not only now, Irma, but always. You avoid me continually."

She blushed rosier than ever and turned her face away.

"No, Irma! you must answer me. Have I offended you?"

"No, Mr. Hazelton, you have not. Please go to dinner. They won't like it, and Maud will think—"

She hesitated, and looked painfully confused.

"Irma, I positively will not go to dinner until I know what is the matter with you, if I never eat a mouthful again. What will Maud think? What right has my cousin to think anything about what I do?"

"Oh, Mr. Hazelton—you—you are cruel to ask me. It was foolish in me to say a word."

"Every word you say is very sweet to me, little girl. Tell me why you dread Maud's knowing we are here, together! Tell me, Irma, or I shall—kiss you!"

"You know well enough," she faltered, desperately. "You know they all expect you will marry Maud, and—"

Frank laughed, and suddenly caught her in both his arms and kissed her.

"Don't struggle, Irma—you are my little darling, aren't you? You love me, don't you? Because I love you so very dearly, Irma! dear little Irma! Maud knows I never shall marry her, and I know I shall marry you, shall I?"

"Oh, Frank!" She whispered it shyly, blissfully, as she looked into his handsome face. "You ought not to love me and lose 'Laurelton.' Indeed, indeed, I'm not worth so much."

"I consider myself the best judge of that, Miss Cloudesley! Perhaps you think, in your humility, that you are not more to me than ten thousand 'Laureltons'."

"Am I really—am I, Frank?"

He kissed her over and over again.

"Shall we go to dinner—or, has your appetite vanished? Mine has, after such nectar as your kisses."

She laughed, then he saw her beautiful mouth begin to quiver.

"Frank—you won't be angry, will you? promise me! It wasn't my fault, truly, but grandpa's."

She looked so wistfully at him, and her language was so puzzling, that he laughed outright.

"Angry!—never! Promise you!—any thing!"

She leaned her head forward, so he could not see her face.

"I am not Irma Cloudesley, but Irma Ransom. Sister Florence and I exchanged identities with Maud and Ida, who are really the Misses Cloudesley. So, after all, Frank, you shall have 'Laurelton'—if you will take it. Will you—with me?"

That of course settled it, since Frank was so anxious to have Irma. And, so, after all, Aunt Sara's ruse de guerre accomplished the desired end, on the unalterable principle that she and the rest of us women understand, that men are stubborn creatures, who are sure to do just exactly contrary to the way you want them to do.

## The Story of a Song.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

GRETCHEN leaned out of the window, in the moonlight, and listened. It was a beautiful night. The air was like etherealized silver, and the moon was like a new world in its white and shining splendor. The hills seemed like the hills of dreamland, and the mountains which showed so faintly against the pale, clear sky, made Gretchen think of the mountains she had thought of as belonging to the enchanted Land Max had told her about.

To her, as she leaned out of the window and listened, this most exquisite night of nights, with the subtle fragrance of magnonette and pansies floating up from the garden below to make the scene more like one of enchantment than it could have been without the odor of flowers in it, it seemed as if the whole world was enchanted ground. And she and Max were prince and princess therein, reigning supreme in the realm of love. She wondered if ever anybody's love-dream had been quite so sweet as theirs! Did ever any other maiden love her lover quite so well as she loved Max? And was ever a lover quite so brave and handsome and tender as Max? No! No! she thought

not. You see this Gretchen was like a thousand other Gretchens in the world, whose dream of love seems to them to fill the whole world with the sweetness and beauty of itself, and which their happy, foolish hearts tell them is the most complete of any love that ever was known. There is the one perfect love the world will ever see.

One long, low note from a violin trembled on the still, silver air, and Gretchen's cheek was like a rose that has just blossomed, and her eyes were like two stars. At last she heard that which she had been listening for. Max was near her. But then, to her tender woman's heart, he was never far away.

The violin-player set the air a-quake with melody by the magic of his bow. It was a sweet and simple song without words; a tone-poem that went to Gretchen's heart, and told her a thousand wonderfully pleasant things. She thought she had never heard anything so sweet before. What a wonderful fellow Max was! He had told her that he had composed a little air for her, and had hoped she would like it when he came to play it to her in the moonlight. Like it! Why! she had never heard music that touched her as this did. It was so full of thoughts that could not be caught in words! Such sweet thoughts, too! Who but Max would have thought of telling her these things in such a way? This little melody caught itself among her heart-strings, and tangled itself up there forever.

Then there was silence in the garden for a moment. Suddenly she turned and broke the white lily which had that morning opened its waxen chalice to catch the sunshine for the first time, from its stem, and dropped it over the casement to her lover.

"Max," she whispered. "I have nothing half so sweet to give you back in answer to your song, as this lily is. I have told it how much I loved you, and things that I haven't my words to tell with, and maybe it will tell them to you as your music has told me beautiful things to-night. I have learned it all by heart. Listen, Max!"

She leaned out of the window, and sang his little song in a wordless way. She had caught it all. Not a note was missing.

"You like it, then, my Gretchen!" he cried, and his fair face was aglow with pleasure. "You shall make some words for it, and we will sing it together. It shall be our song—yours and mine, Gretchen, and no one else's. See, I wear your lily on my heart!"

"Oh, sweet, sweet dream! Oh, happy, happy heart! Dream on of happy things while you may, for dreams are substantial things, and the happiest hearts will soonest wake to sorrow."

In her little low attic room Gretchen sat, and stitched the laggard hours away, with a sorrowful, lonesome, homesick thought for every stitch she set. She had many lonesome things to think of. There was a grave in the churchyard in the dear old fatherland, where her mother had been hidden from sight one summer day. That was a thing for sorrowful thoughts. Then there was the memory of the old home, which was hers no longer. It seemed almost like giving up a friend to let it go, but there was no help for it. When she looked at this little room, in the hot, noisome tenement-house, her thoughts would go back to the old home, and she could smell the flowers in the little garden, and hear her mother's voice, and it filled her with unutterable longing; such dreary, homesick longing for what she could never have again.

And then—then was the thought of Max. Where was he? Was he living or dead? Two years had gone away since she bade him good-by, and he left his German home behind him to seek his fortune in the wide New World.

Two years! and not a word from him in all that time. He might be dead!

He had promised to send for her when the new home he had talked of so hopefully was ready for her. When the old home was lost to her, she had nowhere to go, and she had followed her lover to the New World, hoping to find him there. But the New World was so wide that she could find no trace of him in it. He must be dead.

The air blew in, warm and stifling, across the window-sill, where one poor, starved little pansy tried to blossom. Oh, the mountains! The very thought of them was refreshing to her, in this oven of a room. If she could only get a breath of pure, sweet air again, she thought it would help her to do her work more cheerfully. She was getting tired out in this stagnant place. But, after all, she longed most for Max.

She dropped her work at last, when it got so dark she could no longer see to set her stitches even, and leaned her head wearily on the window-sill, thinking. And before she had been thinking long, she was crying.

It was then that a violin came floating in on the dusty air. There was something in the sound that seemed like the remembered tones of a familiar voice. As she listened, she recognized a piece that Max used to play.

"I have never heard it since Max played it," she said softly, to herself. "If it were only Max playing it now!"

And then she forgot all about listening in thoughts of Max.

All at once she started up with a low cry, and leaned out of the window in the dusk. The musician was playing the air Max had composed for her! She knew it before he had finished his strain. There was nothing else in all the world like it. None had ever learned it but her. He had called it her song, and kept it for themselves. Her face was pale with eager emotion as she listened. The music seemed talking to her, and telling her of longing, and sorrow, and love that could never die.

When the music ended, she began to sing. She sung one little verse that she made to fit her lover's tune. It was a simple thing, but she had put her heart into it, and it was full of passionate earnestness. She sung it with her soul upon her lips. The hot and dusty air seemed to stand still to listen to it. A man who was passing in the street below, stopped, spellbound, and the singer's song fixed itself in his heart by its pathetic sweetness, and haunted him for days until he gave it to the world.

Another man leaned out of a window opposite and listened, with his face full of strong emotions. There was but one beside himself in all the world that knew the song he had made for his sweetheart. It must be her whom he was listening to. That was her voice! He should know it anywhere! At last he had found the one he had been looking for so long.

Gretchen! he cried, forgetful of the passers-by below. "Oh, my Gretchen, is it thou?"

And a voice came back, full of wild gladness.

"Oh, Max, Max, we have found each other!"

And thus they met, and their little song had brought them together.

The man who heard it, listening from the street, wrote it down and sang it, and it is not Max and Gretchen's song now, but all the world's.

## Heroes of History.

Edward, the Black Prince, and the Battle of Cressy.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

As Bayard represents the last days of the Age of Chivalry, of which he was the end, so Edward, the Black Prince, represents its prime and heyday. The middle of the fourteenth century was the time when chivalry was most flourishing, when war was surrounded with a romance and splendor it has never since attained, and Edward the Third of England, his son, the Black Prince, and the French knight, Bertrand du Guesclin, are the three central figures in every history of the time. It may not prove without interest to us prosaic traders to hear of those splendid times.

Edward, the Black Prince, was so called because he always wore black armor with gold lines, instead of bright steel. He was the eldest son of Edward III. of England, who was the best, in fact, the only great general of his time. In his days war had become a mere matter of single duels, in which the biggest and strongest men were most successful. The lords and barons all fought on horseback, covered with armor, and lived in strong castles from whence they issued with their men-at-arms to plunder each other's lands. The poor working people, who had no horses and armor, were quite helpless to resist. The nobles made them work and pay for their masters' luxuries. All over Europe the while people were as low down as our slaves and the Russian serfs were, a few years ago. They were bought and sold with the land, like cattle.

The only people, not noble, who had any liberty, were the workmen in the towns of the Continent and the small farmers of England. The French, Dutch and German artisans protected themselves by fortifications. A knight on horseback was not much use in a narrow big stone on his head from a top window, and kill him. As a consequence of this, the townsmen were forced to be civil to the townspeople. The different trades, butchers, bakers, smiths, carpenters, and so on, all had guilds or corporations—trades unions we call them now—and knew that their only chance of safety was to stick together. Moreover, they had money, and the kings and lords often wanted it. Consequently, the townsmen secured privileges, in return for loans, that the poor peasants never enjoyed. In England the case was different, for a very simple reason. The people of England, of all Europe, were the only ones that knew how to use the longbow. When the English barons tried on the same tricks as the French and Germans, the English peasants took to the woods, like Robin Hood, and defied the heavy knights to follow them. It was like our riflemen in the Revolution, like the Indians defeating Braddock. In the woods one archer was worth two knights. The consequence was, that kings and barons were more civil in England to the common people. The kings early perceived that it was best to make friends with these archers. Edward III. was the first English king who saw their full value, and made the strength of his army to consist in archers, while the mail-clad barons were less than a fifth of the whole.

The result was soon seen, in the war with France. Edward landed with an army of some thirty thousand men, of whom twenty-five thousand were stout English archers. The French raised armies of a hundred thousand knights and men-at-arms, and imagined that they had nothing to do but to ride over the English. The proud barons were used to despise any one who fought on foot. They soon found their mistake. From the time Edward landed, till the battle of Cressy, he did nothing but drive the different parties that opposed his advance. At Caen, the archers drove in a sally of the garrison, in such haste and with such a panic that the battle was known as "Caen Races," and the English took the town with hardly any loss. The old women did not try on any hot water and big stone business with the light archers. Every man carried an ax, and they used to smash open doors, and go through houses like lightning, if attacked from the windows. Moreover, they could put an arrow through any one who looked out, long before he could hurt them.

At last, this little English army, after doing as it pleased to the north of France, was met at Cressy by the French king, Philip VI., in the summer of 1346, over five hundred years ago. It was in this battle that the Black Prince, then a boy of only sixteen, won his spurs, and first distinguished himself. To explain the phrase, "won his spurs," it must be noted that, according to the rules of chivalry, no one but a knight could wear gold spurs, which were the badge of knighthood. No matter how high in rank, every noble had to become a knight, a page, second a squire, before he could be made a knight, and then only for brave deeds in the field. Chivalry was in reality a sacred society, peculiar to itself. The poorest knight was the social equal of a king, the greatest king received added luster from being made a knight. Young Edward was not yet a knight, and longed to be one. Cressy was to make him one, and being in many respects a very remarkable battle, deserves a special notice.

The course of the English army on its march through France was that of a cavalry raid, such as was common during our late war. It was in a semi-circle, as may be seen by looking at the map of France. Edward landed at Cherbourg, and marched toward Paris, taking in his way the towns of Caen and Argentan. Then, hearing that immense forces were coming against him, he turned easterly and marched to Beaulieu, thence north to Amiens, and so to the coast. He was too cautious to hazard a battle, with his small force, in the center of France, and wanted to be near his ships, in case of a defeat. It shows how history repeats itself, that, seventy years later, his bold descendant, Henry V., took almost the same track, in a smaller circle, and was brought to bay within a few miles of the same place, at Agincourt. Cressy and Agincourt were also battles of almost exactly the same character, and both won by the English archers.

At Cressy, Edward was chased so hard by the immense French army that he determined to make a stand. If he must be driven into the sea, it should not be without a fight. He divided his little army into three "battles," as they were called. One of these held the right, under the Lord Marshal, the other, on the left, was nominally commanded by the Boy Prince, but really by the best of all Edward's generals, Sir John Chandos. The king held the third, in reserve, on a hill in rear of the center, by a windmill. There he sat on horseback, grimly watching the fight, where his eldest boy was to meet the enemy for the first time.

The French came hurrying up from Beaulieu in great haste, to catch the English, who

were fleeing to their ships, as they thought. The first troops came on the field about one o'clock, and at once furiously attacked the English. These troops were knights and men-at-arms. The French king was still ten miles off, with his hundred thousand men strung along the road, for at least fifteen miles. The first batch of horsemen came galloping up, and were received by the English archers with such a flight of arrows, that they rolled in heaps on the ground. This reception surprised the haughty nobles who remained alive. They had not been at Caen. They imagined that their armor would protect them, and lo, the sturdy English archers sent arrows a yard long, through and through them! They broke and fled in confusion after one or two charges. Behind them, hurrying up on foot, was a column of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bowmen, fellows in heavy body armor, carrying big cross-bows. These cross-bows were so strong, that no man could bend them alone. They had to be wound up with a winch, and it took a man a good minute to get ready to shoot. When a cross-bow did shoot, it sent a shaft twice as far as an arrow, but the English archers could shoot six arrows in the same time that a Genoese shot one.

Behind the Genoese came thousands of haughty knights and barons. They had heard of the shooting of the common English churls, and did not propose to trust their noble blood to be split by such low fellows. They had hired the Genoese to do all that sort of thing, and drove them along on the hot, dusty road, staggering under the long march, while the barons cursed them for lazy Italian while it took a long time for these Genoese to get up, and a curious thing happened during the interval. The heavens grew dark, and a black shadow crept over the sun. An eclipse was taking place. At the same time a furious thunder storm came up and drenched the French to the skin, while only a few drops touched the edge of the English army. The result was that the Genoese halted and formed in the rain, and when they came to advance, all their bow-strings were wet and stretched, so as to shoot weak.

At last the storm cleared away, the bulk of the French army had arrived, and the Genoese advanced on the English. The English awaited them in silence. The Genoese came up slowly, and halted close to the English. Then they gave a loud shout, went forward a few steps, and halted. They gave a second shout, and ran a few more steps. Then the English began to shoot, the Genoese replied, and the French cavalry rushed in, and the battle became hot. Twenty minutes after, the Genoese, unable to endure those terrible flights of arrows, shot down while they were loading, gave way and fled.

Then came another strange scene. My lords and barons in the rear, seeing the Genoese, became enraged. "What! These false churls that we pay to fight other churls, get in our way and won't fight! Charge them, gentlemen!"

And so they did charge their own men and killed them by scores, which satisfied my lord's spleen, but did not win the battle. Now came wave after wave of heavy men-at-arms against the little corps of the Black Prince, charging so fiercely, that some got among the archers. The arrows flew in white streaks and struck down man and horse, but as fast as one wave recoiled, a second took its place. The storm of arrows was giving way, and it seemed as if the French must annihilate this army by sheer weight. The other was hard pressed, but not so heavily as the Prince's wing. In this emergency, Sir John Chandos dispatched a knight in great haste to King Edward at the mill, craving help, that the Prince was sore beset.

"Is my son killed?" asked the king, quietly.

"No, sire."

"Is he wounded or unhorsed?"

"No, sire, he fights bravely, hand to hand."

"Go back," said Edward, grimly. "Tell my son that while he is unhorsed, I shall not help him. Please God, he shall win his spurs in this battle."

The knight returned with the message, and, strange to say, the English were so much encouraged that they gave a loud shout, charged the French, and drove them off, while the archers leaped out with their axes and began to dispatch the fallen knights, who could not rise for their heavy armor.

From that moment the battle was decided. Edward, who would send no men from his reserve, without absolute necessity, sent the Prince two wagon loads of arrows, and every successive charge of the French was repulsed with such slaughter that 30,000 dead bodies lay on the field, and the French army, completely demoralized, dispersed in their confusion.

That night the King of France, with only ten knights, fled in despair to a neighboring convent. His whole army had vanished.

Then, the battle over and the field still, Edward the king, unbent from the grim silence of the general, who knew that his army depended on his judgment for safety. Confiding to his son, he embraced and blessed the gallant boy, and knighted him on the field. The Black Prince, who had slain the King of Bohemia, one of Philip's tributaries, adopted the fallen king's arms and motto for his own, and to this day the arms of the Prince of Wales remain the same, three ostrich plumes for a crest, with the motto "Ich dien." "I serve."

From thenceforth he was the best of Edward's leaders, and, ten years later, won the battle of Poitiers from Philip's successor, John, with 15,000 men against the French king's 70,000, taking him prisoner, and destroying his whole army. His treatment of his royal prisoner was marked by the most respectful courtesy. Entering London, John was mounted on a splendid war-horse, while the Prince rode a little pony. At table, the Prince always waited on his prisoner as a distinguished guest, and his whole conduct has descended to the present day as a model of knightly courtesy.

One fact about Cressy remains to be noticed. There is not a shadow of foundation for the common belief that cannon were used there. The only contemporary account is that of Froissart, who obtained his information by questioning numerous lords and squires, who fought on both sides of Cressy.

He says no word about cannon. In 1415, seventy years later, an old MS. enumerating the stores in Edward's camp, speaks of "bows, arrows, arbalists, quarrels, and other artillery." This word "artillery" was frequently used before, for weapons of all sorts, especially missiles. On a misunderstanding of this word, the mistake arose first, in the eighteenth century, and Hume and other historians have accepted it blindly till the present century, when the notion has been finally and completely refuted by examination of the earliest authorities. The only reason that it remains now, is that a notion, however erroneous, once published in book form, is accepted as gospel truth by that large majority who are too lazy to investigate, and take things for granted.





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